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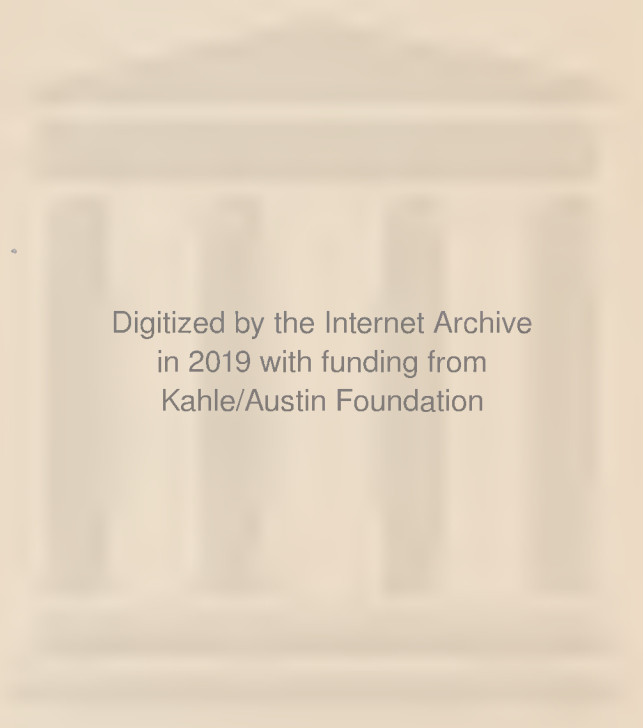
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REMAINS OF THE  
**Early Popular Poetry of  
England ;**

COLLECTED AND EDITED,  
WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES,  
BY W. CAREW HAZLITT,  
OF THE INNER TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.



LONDON:  
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1864.

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TO  
WILLIAM HAZLITT, ESQ.,

OF PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS,

**This Work**

IS DEDICATED BY HIS

AFFECTIONATE COUSIN,

THE EDITOR.

255012







## INTRODUCTION.



THE present is by far the largest and most important assemblage of the early popular poetry of England which has ever been submitted to the public; and it contains several articles which have been known to bibliographers only within the last thirty or forty years. In collecting together these pieces, the editor has given a preference to those specimens of our ancient vernacular literature which, apart from their mere scarcity, seemed to possess a value in an historical point of view, or as records of social progress and change.

The earliest publication of this class—not including, of course, collections of ballads—was Ritson's *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*, the first edition of which appeared in 1791. A second impression, containing a little additional matter, was printed in 1833. The pieces included in that volume were selected by Ritson with considerable judgment, and were edited, on the whole, with tolerable care and fidelity, as such things then went; but the editor is only stating the bare truth when he says that Ritson's texts will never bear sub-

jection to close and careful comparison with his professed originals; and this is the case both as regards the "Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry" and the "Ancient English Metrical Romances" published in 1803. The consequence is, that it has been necessary to make an entirely fresh collation of such poems as it was thought desirable to reproduce here.<sup>1</sup>

The next attempt in a similar direction was a collection formed in 1817 by Mr. Utterson, under the title of "Select Pieces of Early Popular Poetry." This work, which consisted of two small octavo volumes, furnished nine or ten examples of the old English romance and the old English fable or *fabliau*, some of which, not having been theretofore accessible, were acceptable additions to the existing stock of such literature in print. But Mr. Utterson's elegant little series was unfortunately still more faulty in respect to the texts than its predecessors; and one or two of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ritson's reputation for extreme accuracy was, fortunately for him, acquired at a period when accuracy of any kind or degree was a rare characteristic. It is not venturing much to say that if any one should presume, at the present day, to produce texts as abounding in blunders as those of the antiquary in question, he would be an object of ridicule and contempt to all competent judges of the manner in which early English literature should be edited. It will only be necessary to cite such instances of Ritson's want of precision as his reprints of *The Squey of Low Degre*, *Adam Bel*, *Clym of the Clough*, &c., and *The History of Tom Thumb*, in all of which, though derived from printed sources, the most inexcusable liberties have been taken with the text. All the publications of Ritson are of far less intrinsic value than is commonly imagined.

black-letter tracts which that gentleman selected for reproduction were known to him only in mutilated copies, although complete copies might have been obtained.<sup>1</sup>

The "Select Pieces of Early Popular Poetry" were followed by "Select Remains of the Early Popular Poetry of Scotland;" Edinburgh, 1822, 4°. This finely-printed book, which was issued in parts, was edited by Mr. David Laing, who, a few years later (1827), superintended through the press a second and still more remarkable volume, a reprint of *Golagrus* and *Gawane* and several other unique relics, chiefly belonging to the literature of Scotland. Between these dates Mr. Laing published "Early Metrical Tales, including the History of Sir Egeir, Sir Gryme, and Sir

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<sup>1</sup> In 1829 appeared "Ancient Metrical Tales," edited by the Rev. C. H. Hartshorne. I am sorry to say that this volume, the contents of which were not unpromising or unattractive, is one of the most carelessly edited books in the language. The text is not merely inaccurate; it absolutely exhibits, from beginning to end, a mass of blunders, including omissions of entire words. In *The Kyng and the Hermyt* alone there are no fewer than one hundred and twenty-six variations between the printed texts (in the *British Bibliographer* and *Hartshorne*) and the original MS. In *The Cokwolds Daunce*, fifty-four errors, not including trivial departures from the MS., are discoverable, some of these being of a most serious character. Mr. Hartshorne considered, perhaps, that the editorship of a little book of old tales was merely a mild and pleasant relaxation for his spare moments; but the conscientious discharge of the functions of an editor of early English literature involves a sacrifice of time, comfort, and even health, which the uninitiated will scarcely be able to appreciate.

Gray Steill ;" Edinburgh, 1826, 8°. The same zealous and eminent antiquary has also favoured a select circle with two series of the early fugitive poetry of his native country. In 1837, he joined with a friend in printing for presents a few copies of "Owain Miles, and other Fragments of Ancient English Poetry;" and, in 1857, he edited for the Abbotsford Club some ancient English poems from the Auchinleck MS., comprising *A Penni-worth of Witte, Florice and Blanche-flour*, and other interesting pieces.

Altogether, Edinburgh may be considered to have been more fortunate than London in its editors and editions of ancient poetry: for, with the exception of a collection of the ballads and romances relating to Sir Gawayne, prepared for the Bannatyne Club by Sir F. Madden, in 1839, and a certain number of isolated pieces<sup>1</sup> ushered into publicity under various auspices and at various times, no successful attempt has been hitherto made to bring within the reach of students and antiquaries such remains as are still preserved of the early popular poetry of this country, which will be readily allowed to be of high interest, value and curiosity on many accounts.

To any future historian not too shy of venturing into by-paths in search of his materials, this collection will certainly afford no scanty store of illustration for a chapter on the manners of our ancestors, their dress,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Frere and the Boye, The Tournament of Tottenham, and the Nutbrown Mayd*, all edited by T. Wright, Esq., 1836, 12°. *How the Good Wif Thought Hir Doughter*, edited by Sir F. Madden, 1838, 8°, &c.

the ideas by which they were governed, and the vices or foibles which prevailed among them.

A publication of this kind admits, of course, an unlimited amount of explanatory and illustrative matter ; but with Mr. Halliwell's truly valuable Dictionary of Archaisms at his elbow, and the new edition of Nares' *Glossary* within reach, the reader will have little or no difficulty in understanding the purport of such obscure passages as may occur here and there throughout the volumes. At the same time, a few notes of a glossarial and miscellaneous kind have been given, which will perhaps assist in elucidating uncommon phrases or allusions, though the editor does not think that any one who has perused and appreciated the pages of Chaucer, Dunbar, and other writers of that age will have very frequent occasion to resort to the dictionaries for the archaic words scattered through the present series of early popular poems.

In the rhythmical poetry of England and Scotland, words occur not unfrequently which are apparent archaisms, but which, in fact, are nothing more than expressions coined for the purpose of completing the metre ; and it also occasionally happens, in productions of the *vulgar* class, that the writer introduces phrases which occur nowhere else, and of which the legitimacy is open to question. It seems to be a point in English philology which has not received much, if any, consideration, that our ancient writers were liable to make use of erroneous terms just in the same manner, though not to the same extent, as ourselves ; and this may account for the extraordinarily various and often

quite conflicting significations which words are found to bear in old works, more particularly in those of the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods.

Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621, complains that, in his time, the major part spent their time in hawking, hunting, gaming, and such like, and that if they snatched a moment from their field-sports or their dice to take up a book, it was some novel, as *Sir Huon of Bordeaux*, or *Sir Amadis de Gaule*, or a play-book, or a news-pamphlet. Doubtless, in this censure, all the popular books of the day were silently implied, though not specially mentioned by *Democritus Junior*. Indeed, in another place, he says:—"Whosoever he is, therefore, that is overrun with solitariness, . . . let him take heed he do not overstretch his wits, and make a skeleton of himself; or such inamoratoes as read nothing but play-books, *idle poems, jests*, *Amadis de Gaule*, the Knight of the Sun, the Seven Champions, *Palmerin de Oliva*, *Huon de Burdeaux*, &c., such many times prove in the end as mad as *Don Quixot*."

But the passion for light literature was of very early growth. Before the Reformation, the monks devoured with avidity the tales of chivalry and other books of a kindred character, printed and MSS.; and the author of the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, Gower and Chaucer, abundantly testify how universal was the passion of the clergy and laity for songs, ballads, fables and jests.

In the notes or in the introductory remarks prefixed to each article, the editor has, generally speaking, indicated the source from which the poem was known or thought to be derived, and has occasionally pointed



out traces of imitation or resemblance between one composition and another or others of earlier or later date. In some instances, no doubt, fuller and more elaborate researches into the origin of stories and legends might have been undertaken with advantage; but all, in fact, that the editor proposed to himself was incidental or desultory illustration. One or two additional remarks, however, which were omitted in their proper place, may find room here.

In *The Kyng and the Hermyt*, the anonymous author has invested the recluse with the attribute of great strength in the arm. At line 465, the friar hands the king his own bow, and asks him to bend the weapon:—

“The frere gaff him bow in hond:  
 Jake, he seyde, draw up the bond.  
 He myȝt oneth styre the streng.  
 Sir, he seyde, so have I blys,  
 There is no archer that may schot in this,  
 That is with my lord the kyng.”

The king gives up the attempt to draw up the string, whereupon his companion accomplishes the feat with ease:—

“An arow of an elle long  
 In hys bow he it throng,  
 And to the hede he gan it hale.”

This incident is a favourite one in the romance poetry of our own and other languages, and examples of its use might be cited, from the time when it found its way into the *Odyssey* to that of its employment by Scott in *Anne of Gierstein*.

The unknown writer of that remarkable effusion, printed in the first volume of this work, RAGMAN ROLL, alludes to—

“———Danger, that deynous wreche.”

Possibly, when he was engaged in composing the passage where this expression occurs he had in his recollection the following lines in Chaucer’s “Romaunt of the Rose:”—

“With that sterte oute anoon Daungere,  
Out of the place where he was hidde.  
His malice in his chere was kidde:  
Fulle grete he was and blak of hewe,  
Sturdy and hidous, who so hym knewe.  
Like sharp urchouns his here was growe,  
His eyes red sparkling as the fire glowe,  
His nose frounced fulle kirked stooode.—”

*Chaucer’s Works*, ed. Bell, vii. 110.

*The Fox and the Wolf* and *The Thrush and the Nightingale* belong to a different class of composition from the writings of Æsop and other fabulists, and may be regarded as imitations of the French *fabliau*. These productions, which are for the most part in the form of dialogues or interlocutions, continued in favour during a very long period, and traces of them are to be found even in the literature of the time of Elizabeth and James I.<sup>1</sup> The bulk of these tales are anonymous; but of a few the writers are known. Such are Dunbar’s

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<sup>1</sup> *A Contention between three Brethren*, that is to say, the Whoremonger, the Drunkard, and the Dice Player. By Thomas Salter. London, 1580. 12°; *A Dialogue between a Wife, a Widow, and a Maid*. By Sir John Davis (printed in Davison’s *Poetical*

“Merle and the Nightingale,” Chaucer’s *Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, Lydgate’s *Chorle and the Bird*,<sup>1</sup> Feylde’s *Controversy between a Lover and a Jay*, and Saltwood’s *Comparison between the Lark, the Nightingale, the Thrush and the Cuckoo*.<sup>2</sup> Of pieces to which no author’s name appears, the editor may enumerate *The Debate and Stryfe between Somer and Wynter* (to be printed in the second volume), and *The Owl and the Nightingale*, printed by the Roxburghe Club and by the Percy Society from two different texts; and in English ballad lore the specimens are pretty numerous of poetical controversies conducted on a similar plan to the two ancient relics presented to the reader in the following pages.

It has been already intimated, in respect to the annotations which will be found scattered through the present series of volumes, that they do not affect to be of a systematic or elaborate character, but are, for the most part, such as occurred to the editor in the course of revising the texts of the several pieces here assembled.

The principal object of the editor, indeed, has been to render accessible sound texts of as many pieces of old popular poetry as could be brought within the compass of a few volumes; and although he is very far

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*Rhapsody*, 1611); and Newman’s *Dialogue of a Woman’s Properties, between an Old Man and a Young* (Poems, 1619, 8°), may be quoted as samples of this kind of writing.

<sup>1</sup> *The Hors, the Shepe, and the Goos*, by the same writer, may be thought to come within the category.

<sup>2</sup> *Canterbury*, by John Mychyll, n. d., 4°.

from flattering himself that he has accomplished his task without committing some errors, he is not without a certain confidence that, on the whole, it will be found that he has paid much greater attention to accuracy than preceding editors of similar collections have thought it worth their while to do.

There is no reason to doubt, that many of the moral and romantic compositions which form part of these volumes, were designed for recitation, with an accompaniment on the harp or other instrument ; and nothing could have been more popular than entertainments of this kind were among our ancestors. From the earliest period down to the sixteenth century, the class of poems to which *Adam Bel*, *Clym of the Clough* and *William of Cloudeslie*, and *The Squyr of Low Degre* belong, were recited or sung to the harp in the same manner that the lyrical productions of a later age were arranged for the lute, the bass-viol, &c. It is to be feared, that in no instance has the tune or air, to which the pieces contained in this and the following volumes were adapted, been preserved. Chappell, in his new edition of *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, p. 541, considers it probable that the ballad of “King Edward IV. and the Tanner of Tamworth” was sung to the tune of *Under the Greenwood Tree*; but this remark applies only to the comparatively modern text printed in Percy’s *Reliques*, not to the ancient copy introduced into this series under the title of *The King and the Barker*.

The editor has to thank Henry Bradshaw, Esq., of King’s College, Cambridge, for a careful transcript

of *The Justes of the Moneth of Maye* and *The Justes of the Moneth of June*, from the original tract in the Pepysian Library, and for collating the piece in proof, with a view to securing as perfect accuracy as is consistent with any undertaking of this kind;<sup>1</sup> and he also begs to acknowledge his sense of the intelligence and zeal with which George Waring, Esq., of Oxford, has collated several of the articles here brought together, at the Bodleian Library. The result of Mr. Waring's labours has been to exhibit in the most decisive manner the danger of, *in any case and under any circumstances*, dispensing with the verification of printed texts, when the occasion may arise to reproduce them. But readers should not lose sight of the fact, that not unfrequently the means of collation are not at hand. Sometimes it happens that no other copy of the original exists, or is known to exist, than a MS. in some remote and inaccessible repository, or an unique pamphlet in the possession of a churlish bibliomaniac.

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<sup>1</sup> The same gentleman very obligingly collated for the editor in proof the *Mery Geste how the plowman lerned his pater noster* with the original black letter tract in the public library at Cambridge.







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## The King and the Barker.

THE story of *King Edward IV. and the Tanner of Tamworth* is one which has perhaps enjoyed as extensive popularity as any legend of its class. The chapmen's editions of it are almost countless, and it is reprinted in *Percy's Reliques*, from a copy dated 1596. The present version, which has the air of being an early copy, by no very skilled or classical hand, of the original tale, lays the scene of Edward's adventure with the Barker, or Tanner, at Daventry instead of Tamworth; but in both the incidents are referred to the same part of the country. A comparison between the old text and the modern one cannot fail to impress the reader with the superiority of the former, which runs, for the most part, in couplets, not in stanzas. The "King and the Barker" was first inserted by Ritson in his *Pieces of Antient Popular Poetry*, 1791, and it is now taken from that source, with the exception of occasional emendations, where the pointing or the text itself was manifestly faulty. The common street ballad seldom exceeds four leaves, including title-page; but the story is told without much, if any, abridgment. In a copy now before me, printed at Tewksbury about 1770, there are thirty-nine four-line stanzas, making, of course, 156 lines, while in the ancient version there are only 128 lines. But it is to be remarked, that the lines in the former are shorter, and that the alterer of the tale, whoever he was, has not omitted to exhibit the diffuseness common to those specimens of folk-literature, designed, as the great bulk of it indeed was, for recitation in the streets.

*The King and the Barker* forms one of a series of early romances of real life, which have been read and heard with delight by Englishmen, from generation to generation. They were, in fact, the only popular literature, when, after the dissolution of monasteries, and the gradual spread of knowledge, however rude

and imperfect, among the lower orders, a class of men arose who had just sufficient scholarship to enable them to substitute for the long and wearisome prose tales of King Arthur and other favourite ballad heroes, short metrical versions of the whole or (which was also frequently done) of detached portions, better suited to the taste and patience of the crowds who listened with ravished ears to the public recitation of these favourite compositions, the authors of which were quite as much indebted for their ideas to their own imagination as to history.

The story of Haroun-al-Raschid, in the *Arabian Nights*, is perhaps the oldest example of the fondness of princes for adventures with their subjects of every station, and of the self-complacent condescension by which they informed themselves of what was going on in their dominions; though, in the Grecian mythology, the fables of Jupiter visiting the earth in various disguises, Apollo keeping the sheep of Admetus, &c., may possibly be traced to a similar source. But there was no necessity, on the part of early English story-tellers, to resort to ancient lore, and so far as the *Arabian Nights* are concerned, there is scarcely a probability that they were known in this country till comparatively recent times. The practice of mixing with their subjects, and the relish for adventure, were common to many modern princes; and Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, was particularly noted for his leaning in that direction. It was on a singular incident which once befel Philip at Bruges, that Heywood founded a portion of his "Love's Maistresse; or, the Queen's Masque," printed in 1636. The narrative is to be found in Burton's Anatomy, whence, perhaps, the dramatist borrowed it.

It must not be concluded that *King Edward IV. and the Tanner of Tamworth*, in its modern shape, is a fabrication of recent date; for it is certain that, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, *Tamworth* had already superseded *Daventry*. In Laneham's Letter from Kenilworth, 1575, the *King and the Tanner* is described as one of the curiosities in the library of Captain Cox, of excellent memory; and although it is not stated by Laneham whether the Tanner of *Tamworth* or the Tanner of *Daventry* was on the title of the tract, it is pretty clear, from an entry<sup>1</sup> on the Registers

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<sup>1</sup> "[1564-5] Rd. of William Griffith for his lycense for pryntinge of a boke intituled The Story of Kynge Henry [Edward] the iiij<sup>th</sup> and the Tanner of Tamworth . . . iiij<sup>d</sup>."

of the Stationers' Company (Collier's *Extracts*, i. 99), that it was the former. In the *First Part of Edward IV.* 1600, by Thomas Heywood, is interlaced "The Merry Pastime [of the King] with the Tanner of *Tamworth*," to whom the writer, apparently on his own authority, assigns the name of *Hobs*. Heywood has made *Hobs* a droll fellow, and puts into his mouth some of the expressions which he uses in the ballad. It is, perhaps, allowable to presume that Heywood derived his materials for what constitutes a sort of comic underplot in the play from a verbatim reprint, both as to title-page and contents, of the pamphlet alleged to have been in the Cox collection, but, at all events, it is evident that the scene was shifted from Daventry to Tamworth between the reign of Henry VIII. (when the piece was probably first composed) and that of Elizabeth. At the same time, it would not greatly surprise us, if evidence was produced hereafter to show that the two versions were co-existent, and that the Tamworth one becoming the more popular, either from a belief in its superior authenticity, or from mere accident, its rival has been preserved only in the MS. copy in the Public Library at Cambridge here printed.

It would only be an unnecessary occupation of space to furnish parallel passages from Heywood's play, which is in the hands of every student, or from a chap-book which has been multiplied in so many impressions in the course of nearly three centuries, and the leading features of which many have by heart.

The reader will discover some affinities, in point of spirit and character, between the tale of *The King and the Barker* and those of *King Edward and the Shepherd*, *The King and the Hermyt*, *King Henry II. and the Miller of Mansfield*, &c. Everybody knows the passage in *Love's Labour's Lost*, 1598, Act i. Sc. 2., where the following dialogue is introduced between Armado and his page:—

*Arm.* Is there not a ballad, boy, of the King and the Beggar?

*Moth.* The world was very guilty of such a ballad some three ages since; but I think now 'tis not to be found, or, if it were, it would neither serve for the writing nor the time.

*Arm.* I will have the subject newly writ o'er, that I may example my digression by some mighty precedent."

A few anecdotes of a similar purport to the present narrative found their way into the prose jest-books, which began to appear in the reign of Henry VIII.



ELL yow her a god borde<sup>1</sup> to make yow  
all lawhe?<sup>2</sup>

How het fell apon a tyme, or<sup>3</sup> eney man  
het know,

The kyng rod a hontyng as that tyme was,  
For to hont a der, y trow hes hope was.

As he rode, he houertoke yn the wey  
A tanner of Dantre<sup>4</sup> yn a queynte araye;

Blake kow heydys sat he apon,

The hornys heyng besyde,

The kyng low, and had god game,

To se the tannar reyde.

10

Howr kyng bad hes men abeyde,

And he welde sper of hem the wey.

Yffe y may her eney now<sup>5</sup> tythyng,

Y sehall het to yow saye.

Howr kyng prekyd, and seyde: ser, god the saffe.

The tannar seyde: well mot yow ffar.

God felow, seyde howr<sup>6</sup> kyng, off on thyng y the  
pray,

To Drayton Baset well y reyde; wyehe ys the wey?

That can y tell the fro hens that y stonde,

When thow eomest to the galow tre, torne vpon the  
lyft honde.

20

<sup>1</sup> Facetious or pleasant story.

<sup>2</sup> The MS. has *lawhe all*.

<sup>3</sup> Before.

<sup>4</sup> Daventry, in Warwickshire. It is sometimes found spelled *Daintree*, which represents what has been the popular pronunciation from the earliest period.

<sup>5</sup> *i. e. new*.

<sup>6</sup> MS. has *yowr*.

Gramerey, felow, seyde owr kyng, withowtyn eney  
wone,<sup>1</sup>

I schall prey the<sup>2</sup> lord Baset thanke the sone.

God felow, seyde owr kyng, reyde thou with me,

Tell y com to Drayton Baset, now y het se.

Nay, be mey feyt,<sup>3</sup> seyde the barker thoo,

Thow may sey y wer a fole, and y dyd so ;<sup>4</sup>

I hast yn mey wey, as well as thow hast yn theyne,

Reyde forthe and seke they wey ; thi hors ys better  
nar meyne.

The tanner seyde : what maner man ar ye ?

A preker abowt, seyde the kyng, yn maney a contre. 30

Than spake the thanner foll scredeley ayen :

Y had a brother vovsed the same,

Tull he cowde never the.<sup>5</sup>

Than howr<sup>6</sup> kyng smotley gan smeyle :

Y prey the, felow, reyde with me a meyle.

<sup>1</sup> MS. reads *woyt*.    <sup>2</sup> MS. has *they*.    <sup>3</sup> MS. has *meyt*.

<sup>4</sup> In the ballad of *King Henry the Second and the Miller of Mansfield*, the monarch experiences a much rougher reception :—

“ Why, what dost thou thinke of me, quoth our king merrily,  
Passing thy judgment upon me so brieve,  
Good faith, said the miller, I meane not to flatter thee ;  
I guess thee to be but some gentleman thiefe ;  
Stand thee back in the darke ; light not adowne,  
Lest that I presentlye crack thy knaves crowne.”

<sup>5</sup> i. e. *Prosper*, or *thrive*. *So mote I the*, is one of those phrases which are employed by early writers as expletives to supply a rhyme.

“ I kan be mery, so mot I the,  
Thow my fadyr I nevyr se.”

*Ludus Corentriæ*, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> MS. has *yowr*.

What devell ! quod the tanner, art thou owt off they  
wet ?<sup>1</sup>

Y most hom to mey deyner, for I am fastyng yet.  
Good felow, seyde owr kyng, car the not for no mete,  
Thou schalt haffe mete ynow to neyzt, and yeffe<sup>2</sup> thou  
welt ette.

The tanner toke gret skorne of hem, 40  
And swar, be creyst ys pyne,<sup>3</sup>  
Y trow y hafe mor money in mey pors  
Nar<sup>4</sup> thow hast yn theyne :  
Wenest thow, y well be owt on neyzt ? nay, and god  
be for !

Was y neuer owt a neyt, sen y was bor.  
The tanner lokyd a bake tho,  
The heydes began to fall,  
He was war of the keyngs men,  
Wher they cam reydyng all.  
Thes ys a theffe, thowt the tanner, 50  
Y prey to god geffe hem car !<sup>5</sup>  
He well haffe mey hors,  
Mey heydes, and all mey chaffar.  
For feleyschepe, seyde the tannar,  
Yet wel y reyde with the ;  
Y not war y methe with the afterward,  
Thow mast do as meeche for me.  
God a mar[sey], seyde owr kyng, withowt eny wone,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* out of thy wit.

<sup>2</sup> If.

<sup>3</sup> An obsolete form of *pain*.

<sup>4</sup> Nor.

<sup>5</sup> *i.e.* care. To *give care* was an expression equivalent to the modern phrase *to confound*.

<sup>6</sup> *i.e.* without any doubt. *Withouten wene*, which also occurs,



Y schall prey the lord Baset to thanke the sone.

Owr keyng seyde : what new tydyng herest, as thou  
ryd ? 60

I wolde fayne wet, for thow reydest weyde.

Y know now teytheyng, the thanner seyde ; herke and  
thou schalt here,

Off al the chaffar that y know kow heydys beyt der.

Owr keyng seyde : on<sup>1</sup> theyng, as [yow] mey loffe, y  
the prey,

What herest sey be the lord Baset yn thes contrey ?

I know hem not, seyde the tanner, with hem y hafe  
lytyll to don,

Wolde he neuer bey of me clot lether to clowt with his  
schoyn.<sup>2</sup>

Howr kyng seyde : y loffe the well, of on thyng y the  
praye,

Thow hast harde hes servants spoke, what welde they  
saye ?

Ye, for god, seyde the tanner, that tell y can, 70

Thay sey thay lcke hem well, for he ys a god man.

Thos they reyde together talkyng, for soyt<sup>3</sup> y yow tell,

Tull he met the lord Baset. On kneys downe they  
fell.<sup>4</sup>

Alas ! the thanner thowt, the kyng ylone thes be,

for instance, in the *Morte Arthure*, has the same meaning.  
Compare the *Chester Mysteries*, ed. Wright, i. 24 :—

“ For seithen I slepte, moch have I seene,  
Wonnder that withouten wene  
Heare after shalbe wiste.”

<sup>1</sup> One.

<sup>2</sup> MS. has *his with schoys*.

<sup>3</sup> Sooth.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* the Lord Basset and his attendants.

Y schall be hongyd, well y wot, [th]at men may me se.  
 He had no meynde of hes hode, nor cape, ne radell,<sup>1</sup>  
 Al for drede off hes leyffe he wende to halfe ler.

The thanner wolde a stole away,

Whyle he began to speke ;

Howr kyng had yever an ey on hem,

80

That he meyt not skape.

God felow, with me thow most abeyde, seyde owr kyng,  
 For thow and y most an hontyng reyde.

Whan they com to Kyng[es] chas,<sup>2</sup> meche game they  
 saye.<sup>3</sup>

Howr kyng seyde : felow, what schall y do, my hors ys  
 so hey ?

God felow, lend thow me theyne, and hafe her meyne.

Tho the tannar leyt done,<sup>4</sup> and cast a downe hes heydys ;

Howr kyng was yn hes sadell : no leyngger he beydes.

Alas, theyn the thanner thowt, he well reyde away  
 with mey hors ;

Y well after to get hem, and y mey.

90

He welde not leffe hes heydys beheynde for notheyng,

He cast them yn the kyngs schadyll, that was a neys  
 seyde,

Tho he sat aboffe them, as y [y]ouw saye.

He prekyd fast after hem, and fond the redey wey.

The hors lokyd abowt hem, and sey<sup>5</sup> on euery seyde

The kow hornes blake and wheyte ;

<sup>1</sup> Radell, or raddle, signifies a side of a cart ; but here, apparently, stands for the cart itself. Ritson printed *ner adell*.

<sup>2</sup> The royal chase.

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.* saw.

<sup>4</sup> Alighted.

<sup>5</sup> Saw.

The hors went<sup>1</sup> he had bor the deuell on hes bake ;  
 The hors prekyd, as he was wode,<sup>2</sup>  
 Het mestoret<sup>3</sup> to spor hem not ;  
 The barker eleynt on hem fast ; 100  
 He was sor aferde for to fall.  
 The kyng lowhe, and was glad to folow the ehas,  
 Yeffe<sup>4</sup> he was agast, lest the tanner welde ber hem  
 downe,  
 The hors sped him sweythyli, he sped him wonderley  
 fast ;  
 Ayen<sup>5</sup> a bow of an oke the thanneres hed he barst ;  
 With a stombellyng as he rode the thanner downe he  
 east ;  
 The kyng lowhe, and had god game, and seyde : thou  
 rydyst to fast.  
 The kyng lowhe, and had god game, and swar, be sent  
 John,  
 Seche another horsman say y neuer none.  
 Owr kyng lowhe, and had god bord,<sup>6</sup> and swar be sent  
 Jame,<sup>7</sup> 110  
 Y most nedyst lawhe, and thow wer mey dame.  
 Y besero<sup>8</sup> the same son, seyde the barker tho,  
 That seche a bord welde haffe, to se hes dame so wo.  
 When her hontyng was ydo, they echangyd hors agen ;  
 Tho the barker had hes howyn, theyrof he was fayne.<sup>9</sup>  
 Godamarsey, seyd our kyng, of they serueyse to daye,

<sup>1</sup> Weened.<sup>2</sup> Mad.<sup>3</sup> Needed.<sup>4</sup> So MS., but Ritson substituted *yette*. Yeffe, i. e. *if*, is here equivalent to the Latin *etsi*.<sup>5</sup> Against.<sup>6</sup> Mirth.<sup>7</sup> MS. has *Jane*.<sup>8</sup> Beshrew.<sup>9</sup> MS. has *sayne*.

Yeffe thow hafe awt to do with me, or owt to saye,  
 They frende schall y yeffor be, be god that ys bet on.  
 Godamarsey, seyde the barker tho, thow semyst a fellow  
                   god,

Yeffe y met the yn Dantre, thou schalt dreynke, be  
                   [the] rode. 120

Be mey feyt, seyde owr kyng, or els wer y to blame,  
 Yeff y met the yn Lecheffelde, thou schalt hafe the  
                   same.

Thus they rod talkyng togeder to Drayton hall,  
 Tho the barker toke hes leffe of the lordes all.  
 Owr kyng comand the barker, yn that tyde,  
 A C.s. yn hes pors to mend hes kow heydys.  
 Ther owr kyng and the barker partyd feyr a twyn.  
 God that set yn heffen, so hey breyng os owt of sen !





## The Kyng and the Hermyt.

THIS legend belongs to the same class as the preceding one; but here the name of the monarch has not transpired, although it is stated to have been one of the Edwards. The piece, which is unluckily imperfect, has already appeared in the "British Bibliographer," having been communicated by a correspondent, who transcribed it from the original in MS. Ashmole 6922. Mr. Hartshorne republished it in his *Ancient Metrical Tales*, 1829, 8vo. In preparing it once more for the press, I considered it quite necessary to collate the original MS., and I have found the text of the modern editions corrupt and inaccurate to an extent surpassing even the usual measure. The old transcriber has also committed a few mistakes, which I have pointed out.

The partiality of our sovereigns for stolen interviews with their subjects—which, although it has necessarily assumed a different form, is not yet extinct—has proved a fruitful theme for writers of stories and collectors of anecdotes nearly of every age. It is rather difficult to decide which of the stories of this kind, now extant, is entitled to priority; but it is likely enough, that the entire series is traceable to some common original, of which they are more or less close imitations. In each case the parties to the adventure, the locality, &c., are changed for the sake of novelty; but the plan of the poems, the character of the dialogue between the disguised prince and his unconscious liegeman, and the plot, are, generally speaking, as similar as possible.



HESU that is hevyn kyng,  
 Giff them all god endyng.  
 (If it be thy wyll.)  
 And gif them parte of hevyn game,<sup>1</sup>  
 That well can calle gastes same,<sup>2</sup>  
 With mete and drinke to fylle.  
 When that men be glad and blyth,  
 Tham were solas god to lyth,  
 He that wold be styлле.  
 Off a kyng I wyll you telle,  
 What a ventore hym be felle,  
 He that wyll herke theretylle.  
 It be felle be god Edwerd's<sup>3</sup> deys,  
 Ffor soth so the romans seys:  
 Herkyng I will you telle.  
 The Kyng to seherwod gan<sup>4</sup> wend,

10

---

<sup>1</sup> i.e. bliss.

<sup>2</sup> Together. So, in the *Frere and the Boye* :—

“The good man had grete game,  
 How they daunced all *in same*.”

<sup>3</sup> ? Edward II.

<sup>4</sup> *Gan* or *can* (as it is sometimes spelled), is an old form of *began*, and in early English writers is frequently united with the infinitive mood, as in the present passage, to denote, not as Sir F. Madden states in his Glossary to *Sir Gawayne*, 1839, a *past* tense, but an *imperfect* tense. Thus, in *A Pleasant Song of Lady Bessy* (“Palatine Anthology,” p. 15), the Lord Stanley says :—

“Go away, Bessy, the lord *can say* ;  
 Of these words, Bessy, now lett be ;

On hys pleyng for to lend,<sup>1</sup>  
 Ffor to solas hym that stond;  
 The grete herte for to hunte,  
 In frythys<sup>2</sup> and in felle.<sup>3</sup>  
 With ryall festis and feyr ensemblè,  
 With all y<sup>e</sup> lordys of that contrè:  
 With hym ther gan thei dwell.  
 Tyll it be fell upon a day.  
 To hys forsters he gan sey:  
 Ffelowys, w[h]ere is the best,

20

---

I know King Richard would not me betray  
 For all the gold in Christantye."

In the *Visions of Tundale* (ed. Turnbull, p. 5), the form of the word is *con*.

"Full gryssly *con* thei on hym gowle,  
 Her ynee wer brode and brannyng as fyr."

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* to loiter for his amusement. The extreme latitude of signification which the word LEND bears in early writers is curious. In the following passage it seems to be used as the præterit of *lund*:—

"This swore the duke and all his men,  
 And al the lordes that with him *lend*,  
 And tharto held thai up thaire hend."

MINOT'S *Poems*, ed. 1825, p. 9.

We still say *to lean* on anything, which is, in fact, merely a modification of the primitive import of the term. Dunbar, however, has *to lean* in something very like its modern acceptation:—

"This Lady liftit up his cluvis cleir,  
 And leit him liftly *lene* upone hir *kne*."

DUNBAR'S *Poems*, ed. Laing, i. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Coppices, or thickets.

<sup>3</sup> Moor, or any other *open* ground.

In ȝour playng wher ȝe have bene?

W[h]ere have ye most gam sene

Off dere in this forest?

They answerd, and fell on kne:

30

Over all, Lord, is gret plēte,

Both est and west;

We may schew you, at a syȝt,

Two thousand dere this same nyȝt,

Or ye son go to reste.

An old fost<sup>er</sup> drew hym nere,

Lyfans, Lord, I saw a dere

Under a tre,

So grete a hed as he bare

Sych one saw I never arc,<sup>1</sup>

40

No feyrer myht be.

He is more than any two,

That ever I saw on erth go.

Than seyde the kyng so fre:

Thy waryson<sup>2</sup> I will ye geve

Ever more, whyll you doyst lyve,

That dere you late me se.

<sup>1</sup> i. e. ere, before.

<sup>2</sup> *Waryson*, or *warison*, means a *free gift*; but here we must understand, I imagine, a *free pension*. It is a very common word, and is also found in the early Scottish writers, in a similar sense. Thus, in *Poems by Alexander Scot* (1568), we have:—

“Lave preysis, but comparesone,  
Both gentill, sempill, generall;  
And of fre will *gevis waresone*.”

Gower (*Confessio Amantis*, ed. Pauli, i. 64), seems to employ it



Upon the morne thei ryden fast  
 With houndes and with hornes blast ;  
 To wodde than are thei wente. 50  
 Netts and gynnes than leyde he,  
 Every areher to hys tre,  
 With bowys redy bent,  
 The blew thrys, uncoupuld hounds,  
 They reysed the dere up that stonde<sup>1</sup>  
 So nere, that span and spreng<sup>2</sup>  
 The hounds all, as they were wode ;  
 They ronned the dere *thorowe the*<sup>3</sup> wode ;  
 The kyng hys hors he hent.  
 The kyng sate one a god coreser, 60  
 Ffast he rode after y<sup>e</sup> dere,  
 And chasyd hym ryght fast,  
 Both thorow thyke and thine ;  
 Thorow the forest he gan wyn  
 With hounds and hornes blast ;

---

in the following passages merely as a synonyme for *wealth* or *worldly goods* :—

“Goth in the worldes cause aboute,  
 How that he might his warison  
 Encrese——”

“My fader here hath but a lite  
 Of *warison*, and that he wende  
 Had all be lost.”

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* that time.

<sup>2</sup> Leapt. It is, in fact, an obsolete form of *sprang*.

<sup>3</sup> The transcriber of the MS. copied, clearly in error, *as they were wode*, from the preceding line. It is evident that the original author wrote something like the words which I have interpolated.

The kyng had followyd hym so long,  
Hys god sted was ne strong,

Hys hert away was past ;  
Horn ne hunter myght he not here,  
So ranne the hounds at the dere, 70

A wey was at the last.  
The kyng had folowyd hym so long,  
Ffro mydey to y<sup>e</sup> euen song,

That lykyd hym full ille.  
He ne wyst w[h]ere that he was,  
Ne out of the forest for to passe,

And thus he rode all wylle.<sup>1</sup>  
Whyle I may y<sup>e</sup> dey lizht se,  
Better is to loge under a tre,  
He seyde hym selve untylle. 80

The kyng cast in hys wytte :  
Gyff I stryke into a pytte,  
Hors and man myght spylle.  
I have herd pore men call at morrow  
Seynt Julyan<sup>2</sup> send yem god harborow,  
When that they had nede ;

---

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* evil. In a MS. of the *Tale of the Basyn*, supposed by Mr. Wright, who edited it in 1836, to be written in the Salopian dialect, are the following lines :—

“ The lother hade litull thoȝt,  
Off husbandry cowth he noȝt,  
But alle his wyves will be wroȝt.”

<sup>2</sup> St. Julian was the patron of pilgrims and travellers, as well as of a less respectable class of persons. See Brand's *Popular Antiquities* (ed. 1849, i. 359, note 4).

And that when that they were travyst,<sup>1</sup>  
 And of herborow were abayst,<sup>2</sup>  
     He wole<sup>3</sup> them wysse and rede.  
 Seynt Julyan, as I ame trew knyȝt,                      90  
 Send me grace this iche nyght,  
     Of god harborow to sped;  
 A gift I schall thee gyve  
 Every yere, whyll that I lyve,  
     Ffolke for thi sake to fede.<sup>4</sup>  
 As he rode whyll he had lyȝt,  
 And at the last he hade syght  
     Off an hermyte hym be syde.  
 Off that syght he was full feyn:  
 Ffor he would gladly be in the pleyn,<sup>5</sup>                      100  
     And theder he gan to ryde.  
 An hermytage he found there,  
 He trowyd a chapell that it were,  
     Then seyde the kyng that tyde:  
 Now, seynt Julyan, a bonne v[e]ntyll,<sup>6</sup>  
 As pylgrymes know full wele,  
     Yonder I wyll abyde.  
 A lytell ȝate he fond neye,  
 There on he gan to call and cry,  
     That within myght here.                      110

---

<sup>1</sup> Bewildered.

<sup>2</sup> Ill provided, destitute.

<sup>3</sup> Would.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* to relieve travellers and pilgrims.

<sup>5</sup> *i. e.* the open ground as distinguished from the wood.

<sup>6</sup> Good fortune, or good luck.

That herd an hermyte there within,  
 Unto the gate he gan to wyn,  
     Bedyng his preyer.<sup>1</sup>  
 And when the hermyt saw the kyng,  
 He seyð: Sir, gode cuyn.  
     Wele worth thee, Sir Frere,  
 I prey thee I myht be thy gest:  
 Ffor I have ryden wyll in this forest,  
     And nyȝht neyȝes me nere.  
 The hermyte seyð: So mote I the, 120  
 Ffor sych a lord as ye be,  
     I have non herborow tyll,  
 Bot if it [be] for pore a wyȝht,  
 I ne der not herbor hym a nyȝt,  
     But he for faute schuld spyll.  
 I won here in wyldenes,  
 With rotys and rynds among wyld bests,  
     As it is my Lords wylle.  
 The kyng seyð: I ye beseche,  
 The wey to the tounce thou wold me teche; 130  
     And I schall thee be hyght,  
 That I schall thy trevell quyte  
 That thou schall me not wyte,  
     Or passyth this fortnyȝt;  
 And if thou wyll not, late thy knave<sup>2</sup> go,  
 To teche me a myle or two,  
     The whylys I have dey lyght.

---

<sup>1</sup> Saying his prayers on his beads.

<sup>2</sup> Servant.

By Seynt Mary, said the frere,  
Schorte sirvys getys thou here,

And I ean rede a ryght.

140

Then seyde the kyng: My dere frend,  
The wey to the towne if I schuld wynd,

How fer may it be?

Sir, he seyde, so mote I thryve,  
To the towne is myles fyve

Ffrom this long tre;

A wyld wey I hold it were,  
The wey to wend, I you swere,

Ye bot<sup>1</sup> [by] the dey may se.

Than seyde the kyng: Bi gods myght,

150

Ermyte, I schall harborow with ye this nyght,

And els I were wo.

Me thinke, seyde the hermyte, thou arte a stoute syre,  
I have ete up all the hyre

That ever thou gafe me,

Were I oute of my hermyte wede,  
Off thy favyll<sup>2</sup> I wold not dred,

Thaff<sup>3</sup> thou were sych thre.

Loth I were with thee to fyght;

I will herbor thee all nyght,

160

And it be-hovyth so to be.

Sych gode as thou fynds here, take,

And aske thyn in for God's sake.

Gladly, sir, sayde he.

<sup>1</sup> Original has *Bot ye*.

<sup>2</sup> *Cajolery, deception.*

<sup>3</sup> *Though.*

Hys stede into the house he lede,  
 With litter son he gau hym bed,  
 Met ne was there now [nor eorn :]  
 The frere he had bot barly stro,  
 Two thiake bendsfull without mo :<sup>1</sup>

Efor soth it was furth born.  
 Before the hors the kyng it leyd.  
 Be Seynt Mary, the hermyte seyde,  
 Every thing have we non.  
 The kyng seyde : Gram̄sy, frere,  
 Wele at es ame I now here ;

170

A nyȝt wyll son be gon.  
 The kyng was never so servysable,  
 He hew the wode, and kepyd the stable :

God fare he gan hym dyȝht.  
 And made hym ryȝt well at es,  
 And ever the fyre befor hys nese,

180

Brynand feyr and bryȝt.  
 Leve Ermyte, seyde the kyng,  
 Mete and thou have any thing,  
 To soper you us dyȝht :

For sirteynly, as I thee sey,  
 I ne had never so sory a dey,

That I ne hade a mery nyȝt.  
 The kyng seyde : Be Gods are,<sup>2</sup>  
 And I sych an hermyte were,

190

And wonyd in this forest,  
 When forsters were gon to slep,

<sup>1</sup> Original has *no*.<sup>2</sup> God's Heir.

Than I wold east off my eope,  
And wake both est and weste,  
With a bow of huc full strong  
And arowys knyte in a thong,  
That wold me lyke best.

The kyng of venyson hath non nede,  
3it myȝht me hape to haue a brede,  
To glad me and my gest.

200

The hermyte seyde to the kyng :  
Leve sir, where is thy duellyng ?

I praye you wolde me sey.  
Sir, he seyde, so mote I the,  
In the kyngs courte I have be

Duelyng many a dey ;  
And my lord rode on huntynge,  
As grete lords doth many tyme,  
That giff them<sup>1</sup> myche to pley ;<sup>2</sup>  
And after a grete hert have we redyn,  
And mekyll travell we have byden,

210

And yit he scape a way.  
To dey, erly in the mornynge,  
The kyng rode on huntynge,  
And all the courte beden ;<sup>3</sup>  
A dere we reysed in that stonds,  
And gane chase with our hounds ;

A feyrer had never man sene.  
I have folowyd hym all this dey,  
And ryden many a wylsom wey,  
He dyd me trey and tene.

220

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* themselves.<sup>2</sup> Field-sports.<sup>3</sup> Together.

I pray 3ou helpe, I were at es  
Thou bouȝt never sò god sirvese<sup>1</sup>

In sted there thou hast bene.

The crmyte seyð: So God me save,  
Thou take sych gode as we have,

We schall not hyll with thee.

Bred and chese forth he brouȝt,  
The kyng ete whyles hym thouȝt,

Non othyr mete saw he ;

230

Sethen thyn drynke he drouȝe,

Ther on he had sone ynouȝe,

Than seyð the kyng so fre :

Hermyt, pute up this mete tyte,

And if I may, I schall ye quyte,

Or passyd be thes monthys thre.

Then seyð the kyng: Be Gods grace,

Thou wonys in a mery place,

To schote thou schuld lere ;

When the forsters are go to reste,

240

Some tyme thou myȝt have off the best,

All of the wylld dere.

I wold hold it for no skath,

Thoff thou had bow and arowys bothe,

All thoff thou be a frere.

Ther is no foster<sup>2</sup> in all this fe,

That wold sych herme to thee,

There thou may leve here.

The Armyte seyð: So mote thou go,

Hast thou any othyr herand than so

250

On to my lord the kyng?

<sup>1</sup> Original has *sirvege*.

<sup>2</sup> Forester.



I schall be trew to hym, I trow,  
 Ffor to wayte my lords prow,  
 Ffor dred of syeh a thing:  
 Ffor iff I were take with syeh a dede,  
 To the courte thou wold me lede,  
 And to prison me bryng.

Bot if I myȝt my ranson gete,  
 Be bound in prison, and sorow grete,  
 And in perell to hyng. 260

Than seyð the kyng: I wold not lete,  
 When thou arte in this forest sette  
 To stalke, when men are at rest.

Now, as thou arte a trew man,  
 Iff you ouȝt of scheting can,  
 Ne hyll it not with your guest:  
 Ffor, be hym that dyȝed on tre,  
 Ther schall no man wyte for me,  
 Whyll my lyve wyll lest.

Now, hermyte, for thy professyon, 270  
 ȝiff thou have any venison,  
 Thou ȝiff me of the best.

The ermyte seyð: Men of grete state  
 Our ordyr they wold make full of bate,  
 And on to prison bryng.<sup>1</sup>

*	*	*	*	*	
*	*	*	*	*	
	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	
*	*	*	*	*	280

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<sup>1</sup> There is an hiatus here in the MS.

Aboute schych mastery  
 To be in preyer and in penans,  
 And arne ther met by chans,  
 And not be archery.  
 Many dey I have her ben,  
 And flesche mete I ete non,  
 Bot mylke off the ky.  
 Warne thee wele, and go to slepe,  
 And I schall lape thee with my cope,  
 Softly to lyze.

290

Thou semys a felow, seyd the frere,  
 It is long gon seth any was here,  
 Bot thou thy selve to nyght.  
 Unto a cofyr he gan go,  
 And toke forth candylls two ;  
 And sone there were a lyght.  
 A cloth he brouzt, and bred full whyte,  
 And venyson ybake tyte.

Agen he yede full ryght,  
 Venyson salt and fressch he brouzt,  
 And bade him chese ; wher off hym thouzt  
 Colopys for to dyght.

300

Well may ye wyte ynow they had,  
 The kyng ete, and made hym glad,  
 And grete lauẏtere he lowẏe :  
 Nere I had spoke of archery,  
 I myzt have ete my bred full dryhe,

The kyng made it full towghe.  
 Now Crysts blyssing have sych a frere,  
 That thus cane ordeyn our soper,  
 And stalke under the wode bowe.

310

The kyng hym selve, so mote I the,  
Ys not better at es than we,

And we have drinke y nowȝe.

The hermyt seyð : Be Seynt Savyoure,  
I have a pott of galons foure,

Standyng in a wro.

Ther is but thou and I, and my knave,  
Som solas schall we have,

Sethyn we are no mo.

320

The hermyte callyd hys knave full ryȝt,  
Wyllyn Alyn for soth he hyght,

And bad hym be lyve, and go.

And taugȝt hym priuely to a sted,  
To feeche the hors corne and bred,

And luke that thou do so.

Unto the knave seyð the frere :

Efelow, go wyȝtly here ;

Thou do as I thee sey.

Be syde my bed thou must goo

330

And take up a floute of strowe,<sup>1</sup>

Als softly as thou may ;

A hownyd pote ther standys there,

And God forbot that we it spare,

To drynke, to it be dey.

And bryng me forth my schell,

And every man schall have his dele,

And I schall kene us pley.

The hermyte seyð : Now schall I se,

Iff thou any felow be,

340

Or off pley canst ought.

---

<sup>1</sup> MS. has *strawe*.

The kyng seyð : So mote I the,  
 Sey you what thou will with me ;

Thy wyll it schall be wrouzt.

When the coppe comys into the plas,

Canst thou sey *fusty bandyas*,<sup>1</sup>

And thinke it in your thouzt ?

And you schall here a totted<sup>2</sup> frere

Say *Stryke pantnere* ;

And in y<sup>r</sup> cope leve ryzt nouzt.

350

And when the coppe was forth brouzt,

It was oute of the kyngs thouzt,

That word that he schuld sey.

The frere seyð *fusty bandyas*,

Then seyð y<sup>e</sup> kyng : Alas, alas ;

His word it was a wey.

What, art you mad ? seyð the frere,

Caust thou not say *stryke pantere* ?

Wylt thou lerne all dey ?

And if thou este forgete it ons,

360

Thou gets no drinke in this wons,

Bot ziff thou thinke upon thy pley.

*Ffusty bandias*, the frere seyð,

And gafe the coppe sych a breyd,

That well nyh of izede,

The knave fyllyd and up it zede in plas ;

The kyng seyð *fusty bandyas* ;

<sup>1</sup> This and the following phrases, used by the hermit, are probably the usual gibberish introduced, on such occasions, into poems and plays: for instance, in Marlowe's *Faustus*, where Robin the ostler attempts, by means of one of Faustus' books, to do a little conjuration.

<sup>2</sup> Tottering, giddy.

Ther to hym stod gret nede.  
*Ffusty bandyas*, seyð the frere,  
 How long hast thou stond here, 370  
 Or thou couth do thy dede ?  
 Ffyll this eft, and late us lyke,  
 And between rost us a styke,  
 Thus holy lyve to lede.  
 The knave fyllyd the coppe full tyte,  
 And brouȝt it furth with grete delyte ;  
 Be for hym gan it stand.  
*Ffusty bandyas*, seyð the frere ;  
 The kyng sey'd *stryke pantere*,  
 And toke it in hys hand ; 380  
 And stroke halve and more :  
 Thys is y<sup>e</sup> best pley, I suere,  
 That ever I saw in lond.  
 I hyght thee, hermyte, I schall y<sup>e</sup> geue ;  
 I schall thee quyte, if y<sup>t</sup> I lyve,  
 The god pley thou hast us fond.  
 Than seyð the hermyte : God quyte all ;  
 Bot when thou comys to thy lords haule,  
 Thou wyll for gete the frere.  
 Bot wher thou comyst nyght ore dey, 390  
 ȝit myȝht thou thynk upon the pley,  
 That thou hast sene here.  
 And thou com among gentyll men,  
 They wyll laugh then, hem<sup>1</sup> y<sup>t</sup> ken,  
 And make full mery chere,

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<sup>1</sup> Them.

<sup>2</sup> In the *British Bibliographer*, and in *Hartshorne*, this is printed it.

And iff thou comyst here for a nyȝt,

A colype I dere thee behyȝt,

All of the wyld dere.

The kyng seyð: Be hym that me bouȝt,<sup>1</sup>

Syre, he seyð, ne think it nouȝt,

400

That thou be there forgeȝt;

To morrow sone, when it is dey,

I schall quyte, if that I may,

All that we have ere etc.

And when we come to the kynges gate,

We shall not long stond there-ate:

In we schall be lete.

And, by my feyth, I schall not blyne,<sup>2</sup>

Tyll the best that is there ine

Be tween us two be sete.

410

The Ermyte seyð: By him y<sup>t</sup> me bouȝt.

Syre, he seyð, ne thinke it nouȝt,

I swere y<sup>t3</sup> by my ley,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> i. e. redeemed.

<sup>2</sup> Rest, be easy. Thus, in the *Chester Plays* (ed. Wright, i. 26), the Demon says:

“By Belsabube I will never *blyne*,  
Tell I maye make hym by some gynne  
Frau that place for to twayne,  
And treasspas as did I.”

<sup>3</sup> Ye—*British Bibliographer* and *Hurtshorne*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ley*, or *laye*, is a name for *loi*, or *loy* (law), and is constantly used by early writers as an equivalent for *fay*, or *faith*. Thus, in the Chester series of pageants, the Demon is made to exclaim:—

“Shoulde such a caitiffe made of elaye,  
Have suche blesse? naye, be my *laye*.”

*Chester Plays* (ed. Wright, i. 26).

At p. 117 of the same volume, we have *lewtye* for *loyalty*. *Lay*,

I have be ther, and takyn dele,<sup>1</sup>  
And have hade many mery mele.

I dare full savely sey.

Hopys thou, I wold for a mase<sup>2</sup>  
Stond in the myre there, and dase<sup>3</sup>

Nye hand halve a dey?

The charyte eomys thorow syeh menys hend, 420  
He havys full lytell that stond[s] at bend,

Or that he go a wey.

Hopys thou,<sup>4</sup> that I ame so preste  
For to stond at y<sup>e</sup> kyngs ȝate, and reste,

Ther pleys for to lere?

I haue neyȝbors here nyȝh hand;

I send them of my presente,

Be syds of the wyld dere.

Off my presants they are feyn,<sup>5</sup>

Bred and ale they send me ageyn; 430

Thus gates<sup>6</sup> lyve I here.

The kyng seyð: So mote I the,

Hermyte, me pays<sup>7</sup> wele with thee,

---

in the sense of *faith*, is common in the *Lyfe of Seynt Kateryn* (ed. Halliwell, 1848).

<sup>1</sup> Part.                      <sup>2</sup> A fancy.                      <sup>3</sup> Loiter stupidly.

<sup>4</sup> i. e. do you expect?                      <sup>5</sup> Glad.                      <sup>6</sup> In this way.

<sup>7</sup> i. e. *I am well satisfied with thee*. *To pay* is explained in this manner in Halliwell's *Archaic Dictionary*, art. PAY. *To my pay* that gentleman interprets as meaning "to my satisfaction;" but this definition is not quite satisfactory. In the *Chester Plays* (ed. Wright, i. 60), Abraham says:—

"Sir kinge, welckome in good faye,  
Thy presente is *welckome to my paye*."

"To my paye," is a phrase which not unfrequently occurs in these volumes, and it generally signifies "to my purpose." In

Thou arte a horpyd<sup>1</sup> frere.  
 The kyng seyð: ȝt myȝt ye com in dey  
 Unto the courte for to pley,  
     A venteroys for to sene;  
 Thou wote not, what thee be tyde may,  
 Or that thou gon a wey;  
     The better thou may bene.  
 Thoff I be here in pore clothing,  
 I am no bayschyd<sup>2</sup> for to bryng  
     Gestys two or thre.  
 Ther is no man in all this wonys,  
 That schall myssey to thee onys;  
     Bot as I sey, so schall it be,

440

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fact, "to be to my pay," is equivalent to the modern vulgarism "to be my money."

<sup>1</sup> Bold. See Mr. Halliwell's *Archaic Dictionary*, art. ORPED, which is merely another form of the same word. Constable, in his "Sheepheard's Song of Venus and Adonis (*Poems*, ed. 1859, p. 71)," says of Adonis:—

"On the ground he lay,  
 Blood had left his cheeke,  
 For an orped swine  
 Smit him in the groyne."

In a note to which passage I hazarded the assertion that *orped* was there used in the sense of *bristly*, from the resemblance of the bristles of a boar or hog to the yellow tint of gold armour; and although the late Mr. Herbert Coleridge intimated to me that I was mistaken in this opinion, I still am inclined to it. It is certainly an unusual sense; but Constable was rather fond of such unusual expressions. Gower, in his *Confessio Amantis*, employs it in the sense of *bold*, when he says:—

"—— they wol get of here accorde  
     Some *orped* knight to sle this lorde."

<sup>2</sup> Ashamed, or afraid.



Sertis, seyð the hermyte yan,

I hope you be a trew man ;

I schall a ventore the gate,<sup>1</sup>

Bot tell me first, leve syre, 450

After what man schall I spyre,<sup>2</sup>

Both erly and late ?

Jhake Flecher, that is my name ;

All men knowys me at home ;

I ame at yong man state,

And thoff I be here in pore wede,

In sych a stede<sup>3</sup> can ye lede,

There we schall be made full hate.

Aryse up, Jake, and go with me,

And more of my privyte 460

Thou schall se som thyng.

Into a chambyr he hym lede ;

The kyng sauȝc aboute ye hermytes bed

Brod arowys hynge.

The frere gaff him bow in hond.

Jake, he seyð, draw up the bond.<sup>4</sup>

He myȝt oneth<sup>5</sup> styre the streng.

Sir, he seyð, so have I blys,

There is no archer, that may schot in this,

That is with my lord the kyng.<sup>6</sup> 470

<sup>1</sup> i. e. try the way, or expedient.

<sup>2</sup> Inquire.

<sup>3</sup> Place, station.

<sup>4</sup> String. It is the same as *band*.

<sup>5</sup> *Oneth*, or *unneth*, signifies *scarcely*.

<sup>6</sup> See a similar passage in the old legend of *Adam Bel, Clym of the Clough*, &c. :—

“ I hold him an archar, said Cloudesle,  
That yonder waude cleueth in two ;  
Here is none suche, sayd the kyng,  
Nor none that can so do.”

An arow of an elle long  
In hys bow he it throng,

And to the hede he gan it hale.<sup>1</sup>

Ther is no dere in this foreste,  
And it wolde oune hym feste,<sup>2</sup>

Bot it schuld spyll his skale.

Jake, seth thou can of flecher crafte,  
Thou may me es with a schafte.

Then seyde Jake: I schall.

Jake, and I wyst that thou were trew,

480

Or and I thee better knew,

More thou schuld se.

The kyng to hym grete othys swer:

The covennand we made whyle are,<sup>3</sup>

I wyll that it hold be.

Till two trowys<sup>4</sup> he gan him lede;

Off venyson there was many brede:

Jake, how thinkes thee?

Whyle there is dere in this forest,

Som tyme I may have of the best

490

The kyng wyte save on me.

Jake, and you wyll<sup>5</sup> of myn arowys haue,

Take thee of them, and<sup>6</sup> thou leve,

And go we to our pley.

<sup>1</sup> Draw.

<sup>2</sup> Fasten, fix.

<sup>3</sup> *While are*, or *whilere*=whilom, which is not obsolete. Neither indeed is *whilere* entirely so, though not much used.

<sup>4</sup> Troughs for preserving venison.—*British Bibliographer*.

<sup>5</sup> The transcriber inadvertently wrote *ha of*. The former word is an obvious redundancy.

<sup>6</sup> MS., *British Bibliographer*, and *Hartshorne* have *and in*.

And thus thei sate with *fusty bandyas*  
 And with *stryke pantere* in that plas,  
 Tyll it was nere hand dey ;  
 When tyme was com there rest to take.  
 On morn they rose, when they gon wake ;  
 The frere he gan to sey : 500  
 Jake, I wyll with thee go,  
 In thy felowschype a myle ore two,  
 Tyll you have redy wey.<sup>1</sup>  
 Then seyde the kyng : mekyll thanke,  
 Bot when we last nyght to geder dranke,  
 Thinke, what thou me be hyght.  
 That thou schuld com som dey,  
 Unto the courte for to pley,  
 When tyme thou se thou myght.  
 Sertis, seyde y<sup>e</sup> hermyte yan, 510  
 I schall com, as I ame trew man,  
 Or to morrow at nyght.  
 Ather betauzt other gode dey ;  
 The kyng toke the redy wey ;  
 Home he rode full ryght.  
 Knyztes and squyres many mo  
 All that nyzt they rode and go  
 With syzeng and sorowyng sore.  
 They cryzed and blew with hydoys<sup>2</sup> bere,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The meaning seems to be—*till the road is clear before you.*

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* hideous, dreadful.

<sup>3</sup> Noise. "Ther com to Clarice maiden es lepe,

Silen bi twenti in one hepe ;

And askede what her were,

That him makede so loude bere."

*Florice and Blancheflour* (Anc. Met. Tales, p. 99).

3iff they my3t of there lord here,

520

Wher that ever he were.

When the kyng hys bugyll blew,

Kny3tes and fosters wele it knew,

And lystin'd to him there.

Many men,<sup>1</sup> that wer masyd and made,

The blast of that horn made them glad,

To the towne yan gan they fare.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. has *man*.

<sup>2</sup> Here the MS. ends imperfectly, and we thus miss the recital of the hermit's subsequent adventures at the court, "for which I am sorry, and I hope the reader will be sorry too," as Walton says, in the Introduction to *Thealma and Clearchus*, 1683.





## The Cokwolds Daunce.

THE present tale belongs to the ROUND TABLE series, and professes to record one of the very numerous adventures which took place at the mythic court of King Arthur. In its character it resembles the stories of the "Mantle Made Amis," paraphrased, with some regard to modern conventional notions of politeness, in Way's *Fabliaux*, and "The Maiden and the Sword," in Malory's *Mort d'Arthure*, ch. 26, and ch. 85-6; the latter, it may be observed, being quite a distinct production from *The Knight and the Sword*, given by Way. In each case we are left to judge that the object was to create merriment rather than to censure vice; for Arthur evidently loved a joke and a laugh, and was not particularly scrupulous at whose expense his desires were obtained. The magic horn cannot fail to remind the reader of Prince Ahmed's marvellous carpet and glass in the *Arabian Nights*; of the Steed, the Mirror, and the Ring, so admirably described by Chaucer in the *Squyer's Tale*; and of Ariosto's conception of the *Enchanted Cup*; and (if we approach nearer to the province of history) we may recall the poison-revealing property *alleged* to have formerly resided in the Venetian drinking-glasses.<sup>1</sup> The *Cokwolds Daunce* is one, in

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<sup>1</sup> King Arthur had drinking-cups endowed with magical properties, according to the metrical *Morte Arthure*, p. 18:—

"Sexty cowpes of suyte  
Offere the kyng selvyn,  
Crafty and curious  
Corvene fulle faire,  
In everilk aperty pyghte  
With precyous stones,

fact, of a very large and favourite class of fiction, in which the invariable aim is the test of virtue or the detection of a crime or foible; and we consequently find the same idea prevailing, during the Middle Ages, in a great variety of forms.

Those ill-fated persons, on whose brows some domestic mischance has happened to plant horns of a different description from those referred to above, have never experienced very merciful treatment. Mediæval lampooners and romancists certainly regarded them as legitimate objects of invective, and matchless sources of entertainment for their audiences; and in the Arthurian collection of legends this feature, omitted by Malory, and also by the author or authors of the metrical *Mort d'Arthur*, is supplied by the *Cokwolds Daunce*, which is a sly hit at the amours of Sir Lancelot du Lac with Queen Guinevere. This fable shows how the king, upon a time, wishing to enjoy a little mirth at the expense of his cornuted courtiers, summoned them before him, and required them to drink in turn out of a horn which he produced. The latter which, according to the narrative, served equally the purposes of a wind instrument and a drinking vessel, possessed the miraculous power of discovering the infidelity of the wife of the drinker who, if the liquid, instead of passing through his lips, was spilled over his clothes or on the ground, might be sure that his spouse was untrue to him. Of this the courtiers were duly apprised by Arthur before the trial commenced. The king then desired one of those present to take the lead; but he declined, on the ground that he should be using too great a freedom in preceding his prince. Arthur, thereupon, received the horn in his hand, and attempted to perform the feat; but the laugh was immediately turned against him, for the monarch, so far from drinking of the best, as he had promised himself, received the entire contents of the horn on his breast. The story—which is really a capital one of the kind—proceeds

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That nane enpoysoned sulde goo.  
 Prevely ther undyre,  
 Bot the bryght golde for brethe  
 Sulde briste al to peces,  
 Or ells the venyme sulde voyde  
 Thurghe vertue of the stones.”

to give an account of the feast which followed—how King Arthur made much of the cuckolds, and how the cuckolds looked upon his majesty as their brother.

The allusions to the Arthurian romances, to be found in early writers, are pretty numerous, as in the case of so popular and celebrated a class of tales might be expected. In *A Supplicayon for the Beggars* [Begging Friars], printed in 1524 or 1525, and sometimes attributed to Simon Fish, the writer says, in reference to the exactions of the bishops, somners, &c.: “The nobill King Arthur had never ben abill to have caried his armie to the fote of the mountaines, to resist the coming downe of lucius the Emperoure, if suche yerely exactions had ben taken of his people.” I have been induced to quote this passage because I have not seen it quoted elsewhere. The incident upon which it touches may be found treated at large in the metrical *Morte Arthure*, edited by Mr. Halliwell from the Lincoln MS. in 1847, p. 8, *et seq.*; or in Malory’s compilation, ed. Wright, i. 167, *et seq.*

Ascham, in his *Scholemaster*, written in 1563-4 at the request of his friend Sir Richard Sackville, speaks of the Compilation by Sir Thomas Malory, printed by Caxton in 1485, in no flattering terms; and Dering, the eminent Puritanical divine, commends *The History of the Knights of the Round Table*, with *Tom Thumb* and other “witless devices,” to the burning zeal of some good Ephesian. The following is extracted from the *Scholemaster*:—<sup>1</sup>

“In our forefathers’ Time, when Papistry, as a standing Pool, covered and overflowed all *England*, few books were read in our Tongue, saving certain Books of Chivalry, as they said for Pastime and Pleasure, which, as some say, were made in monasteries by idle Monks or wanton Canons. As one for example, *Morte Arthur*, the whole pleasure of which Book standeth in two special points—in open Manslaughter, and bold Bawdry. In which Book those be counted the noblest Knights that do kill most men without any quarrel, and commit foulest adulteries by subtlest shifts; as Sir *Launcelot* with the wife of King *Arthur*, his master; Sir *Tristram* with the wife of King *Mark*, his uncle;

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<sup>1</sup> I quote from the edition of 1711, in which the orthography was modernized.

Sir *Lamerock* with the wife of King *Lote*, that was his own aunt. This is good stuff for wise men to laugh at, or honest men to take pleasure at. Yet I know when God's Bible was banished the court, and *Morte Arthur* received into the Prince's chamber."

The "Cokwolds Daunce" was printed by Mr. Hartshorne, in his *Ancient Metrical Tales* (1829), from a transcript furnished to him by David Laing, Esq., of Edinburgh, of the original MS. preserved in the Ashmolean Museum. For the present republication, the text has been carefully collated and revised, and the result has been, I am sorry to say, a demonstration of the grossest negligence and inaccuracy on the part of *one* of the above-mentioned gentlemen. It is hard to tell how, in so short a composition, so many ludicrous blunders could have been perpetrated.

There can be little hesitation in assigning to the *Cokwolds Daunce* the origin of the old English country dance called "Cuckold's all a-row,"<sup>1</sup> which was a favourite in the time of Charles II., and which is particularly mentioned by Pepys in his *Diary*, under date of December 31, 1662. Chappell, in his *Popular Music of the Olden Time* (1859), pp. 340-1, quotes "Cuckolds all a-Row" as a tune which became popular among the Cavaliers during the Civil War, and enumerates several old songs which were sung to it.



LL that wyll of solas here,  
Herkyns now, and ȝe schall here,  
And ȝe kane vnderstood;  
Off a bowrd<sup>2</sup> I wyll you schew,

<sup>1</sup> In Bohn's edition of *Pepys* (the only one to which I have access), we have, instead of *cuckolds all a-row*, *cuckolds all awry*.

<sup>2</sup> Pleasant story. Vide *suprà*, p. 4.

"—— Sa gud a bourd, me thoct,  
Sic solace to my hart it wrocht,  
For lauchtir neir I brist."

*The Justis Betuix the Tailyour and the Sowtar*  
(Dunbar's Poems, ed. Laing, i. 57).



That ys full gode and trew,  
That fell some tyme in Ynglond.

Kynge Arthour was off grete honour,  
Off castellis and of many a toure,<sup>1</sup>  
And full wyde, I know;  
A gode ensample I wyll 3ou sey 10  
What chanse befell hym one a dey,  
Herkyn to my saw.

Cokwolds he louyd as I 3ou ply3ht;  
He honouryd them both dey and ny3ht,  
In all maner of thyng;  
And, as I rede in story,  
He was kokwold sykerly,<sup>2</sup>  
Ffor sothe it is no losyng,

Herkyns, Syres, what I sey,  
How may 3e here solas and pley; 20  
Iff 3e wyll takê gode hede.

Dunbar has also the verb *to bourd*. In Udall's "Ralph Roister Doister," Dobinet Doughtie is made to say: "Yes, whether our maister speak *earnest or borde*."

<sup>1</sup> "Herkenes now hedyrwarde,  
And herys this storye.  
Quenne that the kyng Arthur  
By conqweste hade wonnyne  
Castelles and kyngdoms,  
And contreez many."

*Morte Arthure*, ed. 1847, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* Securely; *safe enough*, as we should now colloquially say.

Kyng Arthour had a bugyll horn,  
 That ever more stod hym be forn,  
 Were so that ever he ȝede

Ffor when he was at the bord sete,  
 Anon the horne schuld be fette,  
 There off that he myght drynke :  
 Ffor myehe crafte he couth thereby,  
 And ofte tymes the treuth he sey,  
 Non other couth he thynke.

30

Iff any Cokwold drynk of it,  
 Spyll he schuld with outen lette,  
 There fore thei were not glade.  
 Gret dispyte they had thereby,  
 Because it dyde their vilony,  
 And made them oft tymes sade.

When the kyng wold hafe solas,  
 The bugyll was fett into the plas,  
 To make solas and game ;  
 And than echangyd the Cokwolds ehre ;  
 The kyng them eallyd ferre and nere  
 Lordyngs by there name.

40

Than men myght se game jnowȝe  
 When euery cokwold on other leuȝe,  
 And ȝit yt sehamyd sore.  
 Where euer the cokwolds were souȝht,  
 Befor the kyng they were brouȝht,  
 Botli lesse and more.

Kyng Arthour than, verament,  
Ordeynd throw hys awne assent, 50  
    Ssoth, as I ȝow sey,  
The tabull dermonte with ontexlette ;  
There at the cokwolds were sette,  
    To have solas and play.

Ffor at the bord sehuld be non others,  
Bot euery cokwold and hys brothers,  
    To tell treuth I must nede ;  
And when the eokwolds were sette,  
Garlands of wylos schuld be fette,  
    And sett vpon ther hed. 60

Off the best mete, with oute lesyng.  
That stode on bord be fore the kyng,  
    Both ferre and nere.  
To the eokwolds he sente a non,  
And bad them be glad euerychon,  
    Ffor his sake make gode chere.

And seyde : lordyngs, for ȝour lyues,  
Be neuer the wrothere with ȝour wyues,  
    Ffor no maner of nede ;  
Off woman com duke and kyng, 70  
Y ȝou tell with out lesyng,  
    Of tham eom owre manhed.

So it be fell serteynly,  
The duke off Glosseter eom in byȝe  
    To the courte with full gret myȝht ;

He was reseyued at the Kyngs palys,  
 With myrth, honour, and grete solas,  
 With lords that were wele dyȝht.

With the kyng ther dyde he dwell,  
 Bot how long I can not tell,

80

There of know I non name.  
 Off kyng Arthour a wond[er] case ;  
 Frend[s], herkyns, how it was :  
 Ffor now be gynes game.

Vppon a dey, with outen lette,  
 The duke with the kyng was sette  
 At mete with mykell pride ;  
 He lukyd abowte wonder faste ;  
 Hys syght on euery syde he easte  
 To them that sat be syde.

80

The kyng aspyed the erle anon,  
 And fast he lowȝhe the erle vpon,  
 And bad he schuld be glad.  
 And ȝet for all hys grete honour,  
 Cokwold was Kyng Arthour,  
 Ne galle non he had.

So at the last the duke he brayd,  
 And to the kyng the words sayd,<sup>1</sup>  
 He mȝht no lenger for bere.

---

<sup>1</sup> Original has *spake*. Hartshorne substituted *sayd*, which is required by the rhythm, and which is, perhaps, the word really intended by the writer.

Syr, what [have] these men don, 100  
That syche garlonds thei were vpon,  
That skylle wold I lere ?

The kyng seyde the erle to :  
Syr, non hurte thei haue do :  
Ffor that was throught a chans.  
Sert[er]s, thei be fre men all :  
Ffor non of them hath no gall,  
There for this is ther penans.

There wyues hath be merchandabull,  
And of this ware compenabull ; 110  
Me thinke it is non harme.  
A man, of lufe that wold them craue,  
Hastely he schuld it haue :  
Ffor thei couth not hym wern.

All theyr wyves sykerlyke  
Hath vsyd the baskefysyke,  
Whyll theyr men were oute.  
And ofte thei haue draw that draughte  
To vse we[l]le the lechers craft,  
With rnyng of ther toute. 120

Syr, he seyde, now haue I redd,  
Ete we now, and make vs glad,  
And euery man fle care.  
The duke seyde to hym anon :  
Thanke the cokwolds curychon ;  
The kyng seyde : hold the there.

The kyng than, after the erlys word,  
Send to the cokwolds bord,

To make them mery among,  
All maner of mynstralsy  
To glad the cokwolds by and by,  
With herpe, fydell and song.

130

And bad them take no greffe,  
Bot all with loue, and with leffe,  
Euery man with other :  
Ffor after mete with out distans,  
The cokwolds schuld together danse.  
Euery man with hys brother.

Than began a nobull game ;  
The cokwolds to gether came  
Before the erle and the kyng,  
In skerlet kyrtells euery one,  
The cokwolds stod yn euerychon  
Redy vnto the dansyng.

140

Than seyde the kyng in hye :  
Go, fyll my bugyll hastely,  
And bryng it to my hond ;  
I wyll asey with a gyne  
All the cokwolds that here is yn,  
To know them wyll I fond.

150

Than seyde the erle : for charyte,  
In what skylle, tell me,  
A cokwold may I know ?

To the erle the kyng ansuerd :  
Syr, be myn hore berd,  
Thou schall se with in a throw.

The bugull was brouȝht the kyng to hond ;  
Then seyde the kyng : I vnderstond  
Thys horne that ȝe here se,  
There is no cokwold ferre ne nere, 160  
Here of to drynke hath no power,  
As wyde as crystiantè,

Bot he schall spyll on euery syde,  
Ffor any cas that may be tyde,  
Schall non ther of a vanse.  
And ȝit for all hys grete honour,  
Hym selfe, noble kyng Arthour,  
Hath forteynd syche a chans.

Syr erle, he seyde, take and begyn ;  
He seyde : nay, be seynt Austyn, 170  
That was to me vylony.  
Not for all a reme to wyn,  
Be for ȝou I schuld begyn,  
Ffor honour off my curtassy.

Kyng Arthour then he toke the horn,  
And dyde as he was wont beforne,  
Bot this was ȝit gon a gyle,  
Bot he wend to haue dronke of the best,  
Bot sone he spyllde on hys brest  
With in a lytell whyle. 180

The cokwolds lokyd yehe on other,  
 And thouȝht the kyng was their awne brother,  
 And glad thei was of that :  
 He hath vs seornyd many a tyme,  
 And now he is a eokwold fyne,  
 To were a eokwolds hate.

The quene was of this <sup>1</sup> schamyd sore ;  
 Sehe changyd hyr colour lesse and more,  
 And wold haue ben a wey ;  
 There with the kyng gan hyre be hold, 190  
 And seyde he schuld neuer be so bold,  
 The soth aȝene to sey.

Cokwolds, no man I wyll repreue :  
 Ffor I ame ane, and aske no leue,  
 Ffor all my rent and londys.  
 Lordyngs all, now may ȝe know,  
 That I may danee in the eokwold row,  
 And take ȝow by the hond[*y*]s.

Than seyde the all at a word,  
 That eokwolds schuld begyne the bord, 200  
 And sytt hyest in the halle.  
 Go we lordyngs all same,  
 And danee to make vs gle and game :  
 Ffor eokwolds haue no galle.

---

<sup>1</sup> Original reads *this of*.



And after that, sone anon,  
The kyng causyd the cokwolds ychon  
    To wesch, with outen les,  
Ffor ought that euer may be tyde,  
He sett them by hys awne syde,  
    Vp at the hyȝe[st] dese.

210

The kyng hym selff a garlond fette ;  
Vppon hys hede he it sette :  
    Ffor it myght be no other ;  
And seyde : lordyngs, sykerly,  
We be all off a freyry ;  
    I ame your awne brother.

Be Jhū cryst that is aboffe,  
That man aught me gode loffe,  
    That ley by my quene.  
I was worthy hym to honour,  
Both in castell and in towre,  
    With rede, skerlyt and grene.

220

Ffor he me helpyd when I was forth,  
To cher my wyfe, and make her myrth :  
    Ffor women louys wele pley.  
And there fore, Syrs, haue ȝe no dowte,  
Bot many schall dance in the cokwolds rowte,  
    Both by nyght and day.

And ther fore, lordyngs, take no care ;  
Make we mery, for no thing spare,  
    All brothers in one rowte.

230

Than the cokwolds was full blythe,  
 And thankyd god a C syth,  
 Ffor soth with outen doute.

Euery cokwold seyde to other :  
 Kyng Arthour is owre awne brother,  
 There fore we may be blyth.  
 The erle off Glowsyter, verament,  
 Toke hys leue, and home he went,  
 And thankyd the kyng fele sythe.<sup>1</sup>

240

Kyng Arthour left at Carlyon<sup>2</sup>  
 With hys cokwolds euery chon,  
 And made both gam and gle.

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* many times. *Fele*, in the sense of *many*, is of constant occurrence in that rich repertory of archaisms, the metrical *Morte Arthure*.

“Kateryn therof was full blythe,  
 And thankyd God fele sythe.”

*Lyf of Seynt Kateryn*, pp. 12, 13.

In early Scottish literature, the form *syif* is found:—

“Only to ȝow, in erd that I lufe best,  
 I me commend ane hundreth thowsand syifs.”

*Poems by Alexander Scot*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Original reads *Skarlyon*.

“—— thare a citee he sette,  
 By assentte of his lordys,  
 That Caerlyonc was callid,  
 With curius walles,  
 On the riche revare,  
 That rynnys so faire.”

*Morte Arthure* (ed. 1847), p. 6.

A knyȝht this was with outen les,  
That suyð at the kyngs des,  
Syr Corneus hyȝht<sup>1</sup> he.

He made the gest in hys gam,  
And namyd<sup>2</sup> it after hys awne name,  
Yn herpyng or othere gle,  
And after nobull kyng Arthour 250  
Lyued, and dyȝed with honour,  
As many hath don sene,  
Both cokwolds, and others mo.  
God gyff vs grace that we may go  
To heuyn. Amen. Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> In MS. the scribe has written, doubtless in error, *lyȝht* for *hyȝht*.

<sup>2</sup> The scribe wrote *mamyd*.





## The Thrush and the Nightingale.

THIS and the following fable, which are preserved in MS. Digby 86, fol. 136-8, quarto, on vellum, in the Bodleian Library, and which are assigned to the reign of Edward I., are here printed from the originals as curious specimens of a class of composition which appears to have been very popular among our ancestors, and of which the remains are sufficiently numerous. The best known pieces of the kind are Chaucer's *Cuckoo and Nightingale*, and *Parliament of Birds* or *Assemblée of Foules*, and Dunbar's *Merle and the Nightingale*. The present and succeeding poem possess an interest in one respect superior to any others on the same subject, as they are probably two of the earliest productions of this description in the language. *The Thrush and the Nightingale* was perhaps a translation from the French. It is proper to mention that both these pieces have already appeared in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, but for the sake of insuring greater accuracy, recourse has been again had, on the present occasion, to the MSS. themselves.

St comence le cuntent par entre le maubis et la russinole.



SOMER is comen with loue to tounce,  
With blostme and with brides roune,  
The note of hasel springeth;  
The dewes darkneth in the dale,  
For longing of the nizttegale,  
This foweles murie singeth.  
Hie herde a strif bitweies two,

That on of wele, that other of wo,  
 Bitwene two i-fere ;  
 That on hereth wimmen that hoe beth hende, 10  
 That other hem wole with miȝte shende,  
 That strif ȝe mowen i-here.  
 The niȝtingale is on bi nome,  
 That wol shilden hem from shome,  
 Of skathe hoe wele hem skere :  
 The threstelcok hem kepeth ay,  
 He seith bi niȝte and eke bi day  
 That hy beth fendes i-fere.  
 For hy biswiketh euchan mon  
 That mest bileueth hem ouppon ;  
 They hy ben milde of chere,  
 Hoe beth fikele and flas to fonde,  
 Hoe wertheth wo in euchan londe,  
 Hit were betere that hy nere.  
 Hit is sheme to blame leucdy,  
 For hy beth hende of corteisy,  
 Ich rede that thou lete :  
 Ne wes neuere bruche so strong  
 I-broke with riȝte ne with wrong,  
 That mon ne miȝte bete. 30  
 Hy gladieth hem that beth wrowe,<sup>1</sup>  
 Bothe the heye and the lowe,  
 Mid some hy cunne hem grete :  
 This world nere nout, ȝif wimen nere  
 I-maked hoe wes to mones fere,  
 Nis nothing al so swete.

Thrush.

20

Nightingale.

30

<sup>1</sup> MS. has *wrothe*.

Thrush.

**I** NE may wimen herien nohut,  
 For hy beth swikele and false of thohut,  
 Also ich am ounderstonde ;  
 Hy beth feire and brizt on hewe, 40  
 Here thout is fals and ountrewe,  
 Ful zare ich haue hem fonde.  
 Alisaundre the king meneth of hem ;  
 In the world nes non so crafti mon,  
 Ne non so rich of londe,  
 I take witnessse of monie and fele,  
 That riche weren of worldes wele,  
 Muche wes hem the shonde.

Nightingale.

**T** HE niztingale hoe wes wroth :  
 Fowel, me thinketh thou art me loth, 50  
 Sweche tales for to showe :  
 Among a thousent leuedies i-tolde,  
 Ther nis non wikedede i-holde,  
 Ther hy sitteth on rowe.  
 Hy beth of herte meke and milde ;  
 Hemsself hy cunne from shome shilde,  
 Withinne boures wowe ;  
 And swettoust thing in armes to wre,  
 The mon that holdeth hem in gle  
 Fowel, wi ne art thou hit i-nowe ? 60

Thrush.

**G** ENTIL fowel, seist thou hit me,  
 Ich habbe with hem in boure i-be,  
 I-haued al mine wille ;

Hy willeth for a luitel mede  
 Don as unfoul derne dede,  
     Here soules for to spille.  
 Fowel, me thinketh thou art les,  
 They thou be milde and softe of thes,  
     Thou seyst thine wille;  
 I take witnesse of Adam,  
 That wes oure furste man,  
     That fond hem wyde and ille.

70

**T**HRESTELCOK, thou art wod,  
     Other thou const to luitel goed,  
     This wimen for to shende :  
 Hit is the swetteste driwerie,  
 And mest hoe commen of eurteisie,  
     Nis nothing also hende.  
 The mest murthe that mon haueth here,  
 Wenne hoe is maked to his fere  
     In armes for to wende.  
 Hit is shome to blame leuedi;  
 For hem thou shalt gon sori,  
     Of londe ich wille the sende.

Nightingale.

80

**N**I3TTINGALE, thou hauest wrong ;  
     Wolt thou me senden of this lond,  
     For ich holde with the ri3tte ?  
 I take witnesse of sire Wawain,  
 That Jhesu Crist 3af mi3t and main,  
     And strengthe for to fi3tte.

Thrush.

90

Nightingale.

So wide so he heuede i-gon,  
 Trewe ne founde he neuere non,  
     Bi daye ne bi nizte.  
 Fowel, for thi false mouth,  
 Thi sawe shal ben wide couth,  
     I rede the fle with miztte.

**I**CH habbe leue to ben here,  
 In orchard and in erbere,  
     Mine songes for to singe;  
 Herd i neuere bi no lcuedi,  
 Hote hendinese and curteysi,  
     And joye hy gunnen me bringe.  
 Of muchele murthe hy telleth me,  
 Fere, also I telle the,  
     Hy liueth in longinge.<sup>1</sup>

Thrush.

Fowel, thou sitest on hasel bou,  
 Thou lastest hem, thou hauest wou,  
     Thi word shal wide springe.

Nightingale.

**H**IT springeth wide, wel ich wot,  
 Hou tel hit him that [wot] hit not,      110  
     This sawes ne beth noute newe :

Thrush.

Fowel, herkne to mi sawe,  
 Ich wile the telle of here lawe,  
     Thou ne kepest nout hem, I knowe.  
 Thenk on Constantines quene,  
 Foul wel hire semede fow and grene,  
     Hou sore hit son hire rewe !

---

<sup>1</sup> MS. has *longinginge*.



Hoe fedde a erupel in hire boure,  
 And helede him with covertour,  
 Loke war wimmen ben trewe !

120

**T**HRETELKOK, thou hauest wrong, Nightingale.  
 Also I sugge one mi song,  
 And that men witeth wide ;  
 Hy beth brigttore ounder shawe  
 Then the day, wenne hit dawe  
 In longe someres tide.  
 Come thou heuere in here londe,  
 Hy shulen don the in prisoun stronge,  
 And ther thou shalt abide.  
 The lesinges that thou hauest maked, 130  
 Ther thou shalt hem forsake,  
 And shome the shal bitide.

**N**IGHTINGALE, thou seist thine wille, Thrush.  
 Thou seist that wimmen shulen me spille,  
 Datheit wo hit wolde !  
 In holi bok hit is i-founde,  
 Hy bringeth moni mon to grounde,  
 That p[r]ude weren and bolde.  
 Thenk oupon Saunsum the stronge,  
 Hou muchel is wif him dude to wronge ; 140  
 Ich wot that hoe him solde.  
 Hit is that worste hord of pris,  
 That Jhesu makede in parais,  
 In tresour for to holde.

Nightingale.

**T**HO seide the nizttingale :  
Fowel, wel redi is thi tale,

Herkne to mi lore ;

Hit is flour that lasteth longe,  
And mest i-herd in eueri londe,

And louelich ounder gore.

150

In the worlde nis non so goed leche,  
So milde of thoute, so feir of speche,

To hele monnes sore :

Fowel, thou rewest al mi thohut,

Thou dost euele, ne semeth the nohut,

Ne do thou so nammore.

Thrush.

**N**IȝTINGALE, thou art ounwis,  
On hem to leggen so michel pris,

Thi mede shal ben lene ;

Among on houndret ne beth fiue,

160

Nouther of maidnes ne of wiue,

That holdeth hem all elene.

That hy ne wercheth wo in londe,

Other bringeth men to shonde,

And that is wel i-seene.

And they we sitten therfore to striuen,

Bothe of ma[i]dues and of wiue,

Soth ne seist thou ene.

Nightingale.

**O**FOWEL, thi mouth the haueth i-shend,  
Thoru wam wel al this world i-wend

170

Of a maide meke and milde ;

Of hire sprong that holi bern,  
 That boren wes in Bedlehem,  
 And temeth al that is wilde.  
 Hoe ne weste of sunne ne of shame,  
 Marie wes ire riȝte name,  
 Crist hire i-shilde ;  
 Fowel, for thi false sawe,  
 For bedd i the this wode shawe ;  
 Thou fare into the filde.

180

**N**IȝTINGALE, I wes woed,  
 Other I couthe to luitel goed,

Thrush.

With the for to strue :  
 I suȝe that ich am overcome  
 Thoru hire that bar that holi sone,<sup>1</sup>  
 That soffrede woundes five.  
 Hi swerie bi his holi name,  
 Ne shal I neuere suggen shame  
 Bi maidnes ne bi wiue ;  
 Hout of this londe will i te,  
 Ne rech i neuere weder I fle ;  
 Awai ich wille driue.

190

---

<sup>1</sup> MS. and *R. A.* read *some*.



## Of the Uox and of the Wolf.



VOX gon out of the wode go,  
 Afingret so, that him wes wo;  
 He nes neuere in none wise  
 Afingret crour half so swithe.

He ne hoeld nouthur wey ne strete,  
 For him wes loth men to mete;  
 Him were leuere meten one hen,  
 Then half anoundred wimmen.  
 He strok swithe ouer al,  
 So that he of-sei ane wal;  
 Withinne the walle wes on hous,  
 The vox wes thider swithe wous;  
 For he thohute his hounger aquenche,  
 Other mid mete, other mid drunche.  
 Abouten he biheld wel 3erne;  
 Tho croust bigon the vox to erne,  
 Al fort he come to one walle.  
 And som therof wes a-falle,  
 And wes the wal ouer al to-breke,  
 And on 3at ther wes i-loke;  
 At the furmeste bruche that he fond,  
 He lep in, and ouer he woud.  
 Tho he wes inne, smere he lou,  
 And ther of he hadde gome i-nou;  
 For he com in withouten leue  
 Bothen of haiward and of reue.

10

20

**O**N hous ther wes, the dore wes ope,  
 Hennen weren therinne i-crope  
 Fiue, that maketh anne flok,  
 And mid hem sat on kok. 30  
 The kok him wes flowen on hey,  
 And two hennen him seten ney.  
 Wox, quad the kok, wat dest thou thare? Cock,  
 Go hom, Crist the zeue kare!  
 Houre hennen thou dest ofte shome.  
 Be stille, ich hote, a Godes nome! Fox.  
 Quath the wox, Sire chauntecler,  
 Thou fle adoun, and com me ner.  
 I nabbe don her nout bote goed,  
 I have leten thine hennen blod; 40  
 Hy weren seke ounder the ribe,  
 That hy ne miȝtte non lengour libe,  
 Bote here heddre were i-take.  
 That I do for almes sake,  
 Ich have hem leten cddre blod,  
 And the, chauntecler, hit wolde don goed;  
 Thou hauest that ilke ounder the splen;  
 Thou nestes neuere daies ten:  
 For thine lif-dayes beth al a-go,  
 Bote thou bi mine rede do. 50  
 I do the lete blod ounder the brest,  
 Other sone axe after the prest.  
 Go wei, quod the kok, wo the bi-go! Cock.  
 Thou hauest don oure kunne wo.  
 Go mid than that thou hauest nouth;e;  
 Acoursed be thou of Godes mouthe.

For were I a-doun, bi Godes nome,  
 Ich miȝte ben siker of owre<sup>1</sup> shome.  
 Ac weste hit houre cellerer,  
 That thou were i-comen her,  
 He wolde sone after the ȝonge,  
 Mid pikes and stones, and staues stronge;  
 Alle thine bones he wolde to-breke,  
 Then we weren wel awreke.

60

**H**E wes stille, ne spak namore,  
 Ac he werth athurst wel sore;  
 The thirst him dede more wo,  
 Then heuede rather his hounger do.  
 Ouer al he ede and sohute;  
 On auenture his wiit him brohute.  
 To one putte wes water inne,  
 That wes i-maked mid grete ginne.  
 Tuo boketes ther he founde;  
 That other wende to the grounde,  
 That wen me shulde that on op winde,  
 That other wolde a-doun winde.  
 He ne hounderstod nout of the ginne,  
 Ac nom that boket, and lep therinne:  
 For he hopede i-nou to drinke.  
 This boket beginneth to sinke;  
 To late the vox wes bi-thout;  
 Tho he wes in the ginne i-brout.  
 I-nou he gon him bi-thenche,  
 Ac hit ne halp mid none wrenche;  
 A-doun he moste, he wes therinne;

70

80

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<sup>1</sup> MS. has *othre*.

I-kaut he wes mid swikele ginne.  
 Hit miȝte han i-ben wel his wille  
 To lete that boket hong i-stille :  
 Wat mid serewe, and mid drede,  
 Al his thurst him over-hede. 90  
 Al thus he com to the grounde,  
 And water i-nou ther he founde.  
 Tho he fond water, ȝerne he dronk,  
 Him thoute that water there stonk :  
 For hit wes to-ȝeines his wille.  
 Wo worthe, quath the vox, lust and wille,  
 That ne con meth to his mete ;  
 ȝef ich neuede to muchel i-etc,  
 This ilke shome neddi nouthe,  
 Nedde lust i-ben of mine mouthe. 100  
 Him is wo in euche londe,  
 That is thef mid his honde.  
 Ich am i-kaut mid swikele ginne,  
 Other soum deuel me broute her-inne ;  
 I was woned to ben wiis,  
 Ae nou of me i-don hit hiis.

**T**HE vox wep, and reuliche bigan.  
 Ther com a wolf gon after than  
 Out of the depe wode bliue :  
 For he was aſingret swithe. 110  
 Nothing he ne founde in al the niȝte,  
 Wer-mide his hunger aquenche miȝtte.  
 He com to the putte, thene vox i-herde ;  
 He him kneu wel by his rerde :  
 For hit wes his neiȝebore,  
 And his goſſip, of children bore.

A-doun bi the putte he sat.

Wolf.

Quod the wolf: Wat may ben that,

That ich in the putte i-here?

Hertou cristine, other mi fere?

120

Say me soth, ne gabbe thou me nout,

Wo haueth the in the putte i-brout?

The vox hine i-kneu wel for his kun,

And tho eroust kom wiit to him;

For he thoute, mid soumme ginne,

Him self houp bringe, thene wolf therinne.

Fox.

Quod the vox: Wo is nou there?

Iche wene hit is Sigrim that ich here.

Wolf.

That is soth, the wolf sede,

Ac wat art thou, so God the rede?

130

Fox.

**A**, QUOD the vox, ich wille the telle,  
On alpi word ich lie nelle:

Ich am Reneuard, thi frend,

And 3if ich thine come heuede i-wend,

Ich hedde so ibede for the,

That thou sholdest comen to me.

Wolf.

Mid the? quod the wolf, war-to?

What shulde ich ine the putte do?

Fox.

Quod the vox, Thou art ounwiis,

Her is the blisse of paradiis;

140

Her ich mai euere wel fare,

Withouten pine, withouten kare:

Her is mete, her is drinke,

Her is blisse withouten swinke;

Her nis hounger neuer mo,

Ne non other kunnes wo;



Of alle gode her is i-nou.  
Mid thilke wordes the volf lou.

<b>A</b> RT thou ded, so God the rede,	WOLF.
Other of the worlde? the volf sede.	150
Quod the volf, Wenne storve thou,	
And wat dest thou there nou?	
Ne beth nout ȝet thre daies a-go,	
That thou and thi wif also,	
And thine children, smale and grete,	
Alle to-gedere mid me hete.	
That is soth, quod the vox,	FOX.
Gode thonk, nou hit is thus,	
That ich <sup>1</sup> am to Criste vend,	
Not hit non of mine frend.	160
I nolde, for al the worldes goed,	
Ben ine the worlde, ther ich hem foud.	
What shuldich ine the worlde go,	
Ther nis bote kare and wo,	
And liuie in fulthe and in sunne?	
Ac her beth joies fele cunne:	
Her beth bothe shepe and get.	
The volf haueþ hounger swithe gret,	
For he nedde ȝare i-ete;	
And tho he herde speken of mete,	170
He wolde bletheliche ben thare:	
A! quod the volf, gode i-fere,	WOLF.
Moni goed mel thou hauest me binome;	
Let me a-doun to the kome,	

---

<sup>1</sup> MS. and *R. A.* read *ihc.*

And al ich wole the for-zeue.

*For.*

ze, quod the vox, were thou i-sriue,  
And sunnen heuedest al forsake,  
And to klene lif i-take,  
Ich wolde so bidde for the,  
That thou sholdest comen to me.

180

*Wolf.*

**T**O wom shuldich, the wolfe seide,  
Ben i-knowe of mine misdede?

Her nis nothing aliue,  
That me kouthe her nou sriue.  
Thou hauest ben ofte min i-fere,  
Woltou nou mi srist i-here,  
And al mi liif I shal the telle?

*For.*

Nay, quod the vox, I nelle.

*Wolf.*

Noltou, quod the wolf, thin ore,  
Ich am afigret swithe sore;  
Ich wot to-niȝt ich worthe ded,  
Bote thou do me soume reed;  
For Cristes love, be mi prest.

190

The wolf bey a-down his brest,  
And gon to siken harde and stronge.

*For.*

Woltou, quod the vox, srist oundenfonge,  
Tel thine sunnen on and on,  
That ther bileue neuer on?

*Wolf.*

**S**ONE, quad the wolf, wel i faie  
Ich habbe ben qued al mi lif-daie;  
Ich habbe widewene kors,  
Therfore ich fare the wors.  
A thousent shep ich habbe abiten,  
And mo, ȝef hy weren i-writen.

200

Ae hit me of-thinketh sore.

Maister, shall I tellen more ?

3e, quad the vox, al thou most sugge,

*Fox.*

Other elles-wer thou most abugge.

Gossip, quod the wolf, forȝef hit me,

*Wolf.*

Ich habbe ofte sehid qued bi the.

210

Men seide, that thou on thine liue

Misferdest mid mine wiue ;

Ieh the ap[er]seiuede one stounde,

And in bedde to-gedere ou founde.

Ich wes ofte ou ful ney,

And in bedde to-gedere ou ley ;

Ich wende, al so othre doth,

That ich i-scie were soth,

And therfore thou were me loth ;

Gode gossip, ne be thou nohut wroth.

220

**V**UOLF, quad the vox him tho,

*Fox.*

Al that thou hauest her bfore i-do,

In thohut, in speche, and in dede,

In euech otheres kunnes quede,

Ich the forȝeue at thisse nede.

Crist the forȝelde; the wolf seide.

*Wolf.*

Nou ieh am in clene liue,

Ne recche ich of childe ne of wiue.

Ae sei me wat I shal do,

And ou ich may comen the to.

230

Do ? quod the vox, ich wille the lere.

*Fox.*

I-siist thou a boket hong i-there ?

Ther is a bruche of heuene blisse ;

Lep therinne mid i-wisse,

And thou shalt comen to me sone.

*Wolf.* Quod the wolf: That is lizt to done.  
 He lep in, and way sumdel;  
 That weste the vox ful wel.  
 The wolf gon sinke, the vox arise;  
 Tho gon the wolf sore agrise. 240  
 Tho he com amidde the putte,  
 The wolf thene vox opward mette.  
 Gossip, quod the wolf, wat nou?  
 Wat hauest thou i-munt, weder wolt thou?  
*For.* Weder ich wille? the vox sede,  
 Ich wille oup, so God me rede;  
 And nou go down, with thi meel,  
 Thi bizete worth wel smal.  
 Ac ich am therof glad and blithe,  
 That thou art nomen in clene liue. 250  
 Thi soul-enul ich wile do ringe,  
 And masse for thine soule singe.  
 The wrecche binethe nothing ne vind,  
 Bote cold water, and hounger him bind;  
 To colde gistninge he was i-bede,  
 Wroggen haueth his dou i-knede.

**T**HE wolf in the putte stod,  
 Afingret so that he ves wod;  
 I-nou he cusede that thider him broute;  
 The vox ther of luitte route. 260  
 The put him wes the house ney,  
 Ther freren woneden swithe sley;  
 So that hit com to the time,  
 That hoe shulden arisen ime,  
 For to suggen here houssong.  
 O[n] frere ther wes among,

Of here slep hem shulde aweeche,  
 Wen hoe shulden thidere recehe.  
 He seide : Ariseth on and on,  
 And kometh to houssong heuereuchon. 270  
 This ilke frere heyte Ailmer,  
 He wes hoere maister curtiler ;  
 He wes hofthurst swithe stronge,  
 Rizt amidward here houssonge,  
 Alhone to the putte he hede ;  
 For he wende bete his nede.  
 He eom to the putte, and drou,  
 And the wolf was heui i-nou ;  
 The frere mid al his maine tey  
 So longe, that he thene wolf i-sey : 280  
 For he sei thene wolf ther sitte,  
 He gradde : The deuel is in the putte.

To the putte hy gounnen gon  
 Alle, mid pikes and staues, and ston,  
 Eueh mon mid that he hedde ;  
 Wo wes him that wepne nedde.  
 Hy eomen to the putte, thene wolf op-drowe ;  
 Tho hede the wreehe fomen i-nowe,  
 That weren egre him to slete  
 Mid grete houndes, and to bete. 290  
 Wel and wrothe he wes i-swonge,  
 Mid staues and speres he wes i-stounge.  
 The wox bielharde him, mid i-wisse,  
 For he ne fond nones kunnes blisse,  
 Ne hof dundes forȝeueness.

Explicit.



## Ragman Roll.

**H**ERE begynnyth Ragmane roelle (MS. Fairfax, 16, quarto, on vellum).

The same, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 4<sup>o</sup> (See Rodd's Catalogue for 1825). A fragment of one leaf only is known.

*Ragman Roll* has been printed from the above-mentioned MS. in Mr. Wright's *Anecdota Literaria*, 1844, with a French poem on the same subject, of which it may be an imitation. It is curious, as being one of the earliest of those attacks on the female sex, which subsequently issued from the press in such abundance; and it may be regarded as the prototype of *The Scolehouse of Women* and other poetical satires on the vices and foibles of women, several of which are given in the present collection. In order to furnish as accurate a text as possible, the Fairfax MS. has been most carefully collated with the printed copy in the *Anecdota*.

The origin of the strange title of this piece is assignable to a mediæval game so designated, which was played, as it may be collected from allusions to it in various ancient works, in something like the following manner:—A series of poetical characters were written in stanzas on a long roll of parchment or paper, and a seal was fastened with a string to each description. The roll was then folded up and placed on the table (generally, perhaps, a circular one), at which the company for whose amusement it was designed sat, and each person present then selected a character by means of the seals, the choice of a seal being tantamount to that of the character to which it was appended. The game was purely one of hazard, as no one could be sure, till the

roll was opened, what kind of character he or she had picked out, and a certain amount of amusement and drollery was, no doubt, afforded by the frequent discrepancy between the choosers and their choices.

From being thus a mere lottery, the roll, which was the essential feature in this game, acquired not unnaturally the name of Ragman's Roll, which may be treated as synonymous with *the Devil's Roll* in *Piers Ploughman* (written about the middle of the fourteenth century) and elsewhere, *ragman* or *rageman* being employed to signify the Evil One. It was, it may be conjectured, to the peculiarity of the game that the list of the Scottish chiefs who took the oath of fealty to Edward I.—from being written also on a long roll of parchment, and from the seal of each person being somewhat similarly appended opposite their signature or mark—owed its appellation of "Ragman Roll," a term, at first not impossibly, bestowed upon it in a sportive or contemptuous sense.

Here begynneth Ragman's rolle.



MY ladyes and my maistresses eehone,  
 Lyke hit unto your humbyble wommanhede,  
 Resave in gre<sup>1</sup> of my sympill<sup>2</sup> persone  
 This rolle which, withouten any drede,  
 Kynge Ragman<sup>3</sup> bad me sowe in brede,<sup>4</sup>  
 And eristyned yt the merour of your chaunce;  
 Drawith a stryngge, and that shal streight yow leyde  
 Unto the verry path of your gouernaunce.

<sup>1</sup> Good-will.

<sup>2</sup> i. e. of my humble person. The word *simple* was used by Caxton in this sense, and is of frequent occurrence in early English; its strict signification appearing to be, the condition of one not of gentle birth.

<sup>3</sup> In the list of the contents of the MS. the present piece is described as "The rolles of Kynge Ragman." The word *me* is erroneously repeated in the MS.

<sup>4</sup> *In brede* appears to be equivalent to *abroad*, or *far and wide*.

Thankyth me not, ne konneth me no grame,<sup>1</sup>  
 Whedir your chaunee oon or othir be ; 10  
 As he me bad to write, I wrot the same,  
 And eke ye wot well at your choys be ye :  
 Yf that ye drawe wel, yt plesith me,  
 And the eontrarye doth me dyspleasaunee.  
 Fortunes cours eerteyn ye may not flee,  
 Pray hir of helpe, ye hange in her balaunee.

Whom that her lykyth, makyth she aseende ;  
 And him as swithe ouerthroyth also ;  
 Her nature is to apparyn and amende ;  
 She echangyth euer, and fletyth to and fro : 20  
 For in oo[n] poynt abydyth she neuer mo.  
 Yf ye welle ones happyd, I yow reyde,  
 Chesith, lest eft falle hit no more so :  
 For ay, lest ye mysdrawn, I me drede.

O worlde, thogh thou be large in eireuyt,  
 Within thy bowndes nys ther creature  
 So fortunat, ne stondyth in such a plyt,  
 As this lady whom that dame Nature  
 Hath fowrymyde, so that ther ys no mesure,  
 Be whiche men may her shappe and beauté mete. 30

---

<sup>1</sup> *Grame* is here put for *anger*. It also occurs as a verb, with the same meaning, or in the sense of *to vex*, *to afflict*, as in the following passage from an early sea-song, printed in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* :—

“ Men may leve all gamys,  
 That saylen to Seynt Jamys ;  
 Ffor many a man hit gramys.  
 When they begyn to sayle.”



He that is lorde of vertu, hath his cure,  
Eke one her kȳd, and kan no fyrthir trete.

A smal conceyt may ryght enogh suffyse,  
Of your beauté discripcion for to make :  
For, at one word, ther kan no wyght devyse  
Oone that therof hath lasse,<sup>1</sup> I vntirtake ;  
Yf that the feende hymself wolde have a make,<sup>2</sup>  
Ys none to hym so lyke as ye allone.  
He that yow seith, and sykyth<sup>3</sup> for your sake,  
I pray to God, that euere he syke and grone. 40

Your colour fresshe, your Percyng eyen gray,  
Your shap and your womanly gouernaunce,  
Constraynyn menne of grace yow to pray,  
That day fro day sojournyn in penaunce  
Tille that yow lyst hem sendyn alegaunce ;  
But al for noght ; Danger, that deynous wreche,  
So chasyth peté frome your remembraunce,  
That to your grace may ther no wyght strecche.

To chirche as swyftly as a snayl ye hey,  
But to the temple of Bachus, the tauerne, 50  
To moysten ther your appetitys drey,  
Ful spedful ye rennyn<sup>4</sup> and ful yerne ;

<sup>1</sup> Less.

<sup>2</sup> Mate.

<sup>3</sup> Sigheth. So Gower :—

“ With eye up cast on her he siketh,  
And many a continuaunce he piketh  
To bringen her into beleve  
Of thing, which that he wold acheve.”

*Confessio Amantis*, lib. i.

<sup>4</sup> Run.

And whoo so lyst may thressyn in your berne,  
 So ys your hert fre and lyberalle.  
 O Danger, of theys wemen maystow lerne  
 Frendly to ben, and compaynable at al.

Syn ye were first unto your make y-knyt,  
 Wel han ye kept your chambre of preueté:  
 For hardely may no mane sey as yet,  
 That with your bodé foleyed<sup>1</sup> han ye. 60  
 And now cometh age, foo to your beauté,  
 And stelyngly it wastyth stownde-mele;  
 But pacien[t]ly your benygnyté  
 Taketh alle in gré, and gruccheth<sup>2</sup> neuer a dele.<sup>3</sup>

Whoso that yow beholdyth well, and seyth  
 Your roneled faec and your rawe eyen tweyne,  
 Your shrunkyn lyppis and your gowuldyn tethe,  
 How may he lyue fro dystresse and payne,  
 But yf that he unto your grace atteyne?  
 And at revell for to se yow hoppe, 70  
 Ys joy y-now so ye your lyggys streyne;  
 Ye lade longe sydyde as a loppe.

The digne and puyr estat of v[y]rgynité  
 The fecnde ne may cute of your hart chace;  
 And yet his snares besely beereth hee  
 From day to day, but noght he may purchase,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Committed folly.

<sup>2</sup> Grumbleth.

<sup>3</sup> Bit.

<sup>4</sup> Get, obtain. The word is of very frequent occurrence in this sense in early English compositions.

So hath yow God endowyd of his grace,  
 And sent yow constant spirit of vygour.  
 Oo feende, thy snares ley in othir place,  
 For al in ydel here is thy labour. 80

Lat se who can this woman eowneterfete.<sup>1</sup>  
 Of yehe estat she hayth compassyon ;  
 The ryche hir wynneth with his gyftys grete ;  
 The poore, for his faire condycion ;  
 The bisshop, for his absolucyon ;  
 The priste, the clerk, for her<sup>2</sup> syngyng swete ;  
 Knyghtis and squyers, for armys and renone ;  
 Yomen and grome[s], for thay styfly sheyt.<sup>3</sup>

Ryght as the sonne is the worldys eye,  
 That to the daylyght yevythe a shynyng, 90  
 And all fruyt causyth to wexe<sup>4</sup> and multiplie,  
 Thorgh his atempre<sup>5</sup> kyndely noryshyng,  
 Wythoutyn whom none erthly fruyt may spryng ;  
 Ryght so your bewté sprad hath hys bryghtnes  
 In the hert of every jentylman lyuyng,  
 And fedyth wyth joye and wyth gladnes.

Gret wondir ys, wher that ye han the blast<sup>6</sup>  
 That ye brethyng out, syth ye so meche spende ;  
 For al so soun as oo[n] chydyng ys paste,  
 Anothir cometh : your talkyng hath none end. 100

<sup>1</sup> Imitate, parallel.

<sup>2</sup> Their.

<sup>3</sup> Shoot.

<sup>4</sup> Wax.

<sup>5</sup> Temperature.

<sup>6</sup> A strong expression for *breath*.

Upone your tonge a lokk I pray God sende :  
 For yf hit go thus at his large,  
 Ful many a man hyt shal hurte and offende,  
 So sore that thay shul not bere the charge.<sup>1</sup>

Seyth God first bonde wyth lok of mareage  
 Man and woman, to lede ther lyf in fere,  
 Was neuer woman of no maner age  
 So gud and trew, and louyng to her fere,  
 As ye, ne hath his honour half so dere ;  
 And for to speke of your pacience 110  
 In special, may none with yow apere,  
 Suche ys your vertu and yowr excellence.

O constaunt womane, stabill as the mone,  
 Your trouth kept ye neuer in no mancre,  
 But wheras Wenus actys ben to done ;  
 At day, at place, at hour sette for to appere  
 With suche one as yow list make chere ;  
 Ther byn ye prest to perfowrym your graunt,  
 But yf another heyir yow so deyre,  
 That ye mot nedis brekyn couenaunt. 120

Wel shewen ye that of a jentyl lync  
 Ye ben dyscendyd : for your dedys preyf.  
 Ther may no wyght your hert make enelyne  
 To thing, that may other harme or greyf,

---

<sup>1</sup> Burden ; but here meaning rather, *worry* or *vexation*.

Ne wykkyd report of no body leue :  
 And fro your tunge passe no thinge may,  
 But suehe fruyt as may vertu stere and meue ;  
 That ys your besynes, and hath ben ay.

Ful feire brydelyn ye your eowntenaunce,  
 And propirly unto the brest adowne, 130  
 And your foot ye tappyn,<sup>1</sup> and ye daunce,  
 Thogh<sup>2</sup> hit the fryskyst horse were in a towne.  
 Joly and lyght is your eomplexieion,  
 That steryn ay, and kunne nat stonde still ;  
 And eke your tonge hath not forgete his sowne,<sup>3</sup>  
 Quayk, sharp and swyft is hyt, and lowyd and shill.

Mereurie, that God elepyd is of langage,  
 To yow hath yevyn so gret eloquenee,  
 That euery wyght hath desir and eorage,  
 For to aproehe and neyghen<sup>4</sup> your presenee ; 140  
 And therto han ye suehe beneuolenee  
 With euery jantylman to speke and deyllle  
 In honesté, and yiffe hem audienee,  
 That seeke folke restoryn ye to helle.<sup>5</sup>

Wel wot your husbond that ye ben mereialle ;  
 Your tonge and eke your handys yt wittennesse :  
 For ye so bowendyn han mayd hym and so thrall,  
 That not oo[n] word unneth dar he expresse,  
 No loke nethir ; so your erabbydnes  
 Hath in awayt his wordys and his eheir. 150

<sup>1</sup> Beat.<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* as though.<sup>3</sup> Sound.<sup>4</sup> Come nigh.<sup>5</sup> Health.

Weyr he nnknytte, al this worldes rychesse  
Ne myghte noghte yow two knyttyn in feir.

Now, ladyes, that stondyne now in lyberté,  
Of your gude<sup>1</sup> and bodé han maistré,  
Enl warre, and wis, and ryght dyscreyt ben ye :  
For may no mannys sleight ne flateré,  
Thogh they her<sup>2</sup> malys inwarde keuir and wrye,<sup>3</sup>  
And outfouyrth the fayryst that they kane,  
To mareage make yow for to heye :  
So wel know ye the gret mntroueth of mane. 160

O fayr lady, hewyd<sup>4</sup> as ys the gett.<sup>5</sup>  
How ye al fairen with your lokes glade,  
Natures lusteys in yow weyren so gret,  
That she unnethes roghte<sup>6</sup> how she yow made.  
Not needyth yt yow to kepe yow in the shayde :  
For your beauté noght hurte may the sonne ;  
In lones art men must deype wade,  
Or that ye be conqueryd and e-wonne.

Constant in vertu, flemer of malyce,  
Trew of your worde, of wordys mesurable, 170  
Benigne and gracios, al voyd of vyce,  
Humbil of speryt, discreyt and honourable,  
Shaply and fayre, jocunde and ameabill,  
Frendly and al passyng of fraunchyse,  
Relener to the pore, and socourabill  
Ben ye, and werry foo to coneytise.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Goods.<sup>2</sup> Their.<sup>3</sup> Disguise.<sup>4</sup> Hued.<sup>5</sup> Jet.<sup>6</sup> Recked, cared.<sup>7</sup> Very foe to covetousness.

Although your chekys leyn ben, and thynne,  
 Upon your teyth ne ys it not alonge:  
 For also faste as ye may powron ynne,  
 Al[tho] be the morsel neuer so greyt and longe, 180  
 Yit in yt goth, and drynkyn [yow] so amonge,<sup>1</sup>  
 Tyl your eyen negh han her<sup>2</sup> strengthe lost;  
 And aftir that ye eoghyn<sup>3</sup> up a songe,  
 So mery, that it ys not worth the eoste.

Your riehe aray, ne your excelent birthe,  
 Not makyn yow the prowdir for to be;  
 The porest wyght that ys in honest myrth,  
 With for to dele, most ys your deynté.  
 Your hert ys roted in humylyté,  
 And aquented nothing wyth his eontrarye. 190  
 And to the pore ye yeuyne gret plenté  
 Of your good, where itt ys necessarye.

Your gyse ys for to holde men in hande,  
 And wyth your eye feyed her blyndnesse,  
 And send hem tokynys, wherby undirstonde  
 Thay may, and deme, as be lyklynes,  
 That in the fauour of your gentilles  
 Her pore estat weyr soundell recomended;  
 But eouertly ye of your dowbilnes<sup>4</sup>  
 Bejapen<sup>5</sup> hem; thus al day ben men blyndyd. 200

Where have ye ben thus longe y-hyd in mewe,  
 So womanly that daunee kan and synge?

<sup>1</sup> From time to time.

<sup>2</sup> Their.

<sup>3</sup> ? Cough.

<sup>4</sup> Duplicity.

<sup>5</sup> Cajole.

What woman ys of loue or was so trewe,  
Or therynne hath or hadde halfe your felynge?  
None, syth the world frist hadde begynnynge;  
And sythen ye be so jocunde and so good,  
And in the rolle last as in wrytynge,  
I rede that this game ende in your hood.

Explicit Ragman rolle.







## The Debate of the Carpenters Tools.

THIS singular composition, which is perhaps *sui generis*, is taken from MS. Ashmol. 61, fol. 23-26. It has previously been printed by Mr. Halliwell in his *Nugæ Poeticæ*, 1844, 8vo.; but, for this edition, a fresh collation has been obtained.

It will not be denied, I think, that the poem possesses a good deal of humour and invention.



HE shype ax seyð unto the wryght:  
Mete and drynke I schall the plyght,  
Clene hose and elene sehone,  
Gete them wer as euer thou kane;

Bot fore all that euer thou kane,  
Th'all<sup>1</sup> neuer be thryfty man,  
Ne none that longes the craft unto,  
Fore no thyng that thou kane do.  
Wherefore, seyð the belte,  
With grete strokes I schalle hym pelte;  
My mayster schall full welle thene,  
Both to elothe [and] fede his men.

10

---

<sup>1</sup> Thou will.

ȝe, ȝe, seyð the twybylle,<sup>1</sup>  
 Thou spekes euer ageyne skylle.  
 I-wys, i-wys, it wylle not bene,  
 Ne neuer I thinke that he wylle thene.  
 ȝis, ȝis, seyð the wymbylle,<sup>2</sup>  
 I ame als rounde as a thymbyll ;  
 My maysters werke I wylle remembyre,  
 I schall crepe fast into the tymbyre, 20  
 And help my mayster within a stounde  
 To store his cofere with xx. pounce.  
 ȝe, ȝe, seyð tho compas,  
 Thou arte a fole in that case :  
 For thou spekes without vysment ;<sup>3</sup>  
 Therefore thou getyst not thi entent.  
 Wyte thou wele it schall be so,  
 That lyghtly cum, schall lyghtly go ;  
 And thou gete more than other fyue,  
 ȝit schall thi mayster neuer thryue. 30  
 The groping-iren than spake he :  
 Compas, who hath greuyd the ?  
 My mayster ȝit may thryue fulle wele,  
 How he schall, I wylle the telle ;  
 I ame his servant trew and gode,  
 I suere the, compas, by the Rode,  
 Wyrke I schalle bothe nyght and dey ;  
 To gete him gode I schall assey.  
 ȝe, ȝe, seyð the saw,  
 It is bote bost that thou doyst blow, 40

<sup>1</sup> A large mallet. *Twybittle* and *twybyte* are also found.

<sup>2</sup> Wimble, a kind of gimlet.

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* avisement, counsel.

Ffore thofe<sup>1</sup> thou wyrke bothe dey [and] nyght,  
 He wyll not the, I sey the ryght ;  
 He wones to nyze the ale-wyffe,  
 And he thouht ever fore to thryffe.  
 Than seyde the whetstone :  
 Thoff my mayster thryft be gone,  
 I schall hym helpe within this zere  
 To gete hym xx.<sup>ti</sup> merke clere ;  
 Hys axes schall I make fulle scharpe,  
 That thei may lyghtly do ther werke ; 50  
 To make my master a ryche man  
 I schall asey, if that I canne.  
 To hym than seyde the adys,<sup>2</sup>  
 And seyde : ze, ser, god glades,  
 To speke of thryfft it wyll not be,  
 Ne never I thinke that he schall the,  
 Ffore he wyll drynke more on a dey  
 Than thou cane lyghtly arne in twey ;  
 Therefore thi tonge I rede thou hold,  
 And speke no more no wordes so bold. 60  
 To the adys than seyde the fyle :  
 Thou schuldes not thi mayster revyle,  
 Ffore, thoff he be unhappy,  
 zit fore his thryft thou schuldes se :  
 Ffore I thinke, or tomorow at none,  
 To arne my mayster a payre of schone ;  
 Ffore I schalle rube with all my myght,  
 My mayster tolvs for to dyght,  
 So that, within a lytell space,

<sup>1</sup> Though.<sup>2</sup> Adze.

My mayster purce I schall encrece. 70  
 Than seyð the chesyll :  
 And ever he thryve, he berys hym wele ;  
 Ffore tho thou rube to thi hede ake,  
 His thryfte fro hym it wyll be take :  
 Ffore he loves gode ale so wele,  
 That he therfore his hod wyll selle :  
 Ffore some dey he wyll vij.<sup>d</sup> drynke ;  
 How he schall thryve I canne not thinke.  
 3e, 3e, seyð the lyne and the chalke,  
 My mayster is lyke to many folke ; 80  
 Tho he lufe ale never so wele,  
 To thryv and the I schall hym telle ;  
 I schall merke well upone the wode,  
 And kepe his mesures trew and gode,  
 And so, by my mesures all,  
 To the full wele my mayster schall.  
 Than bespake the prykyng-knyfe :  
 He duellys to ny3e the ale-wyfe ;  
 Sche makes oft tyme his purse full thynne,  
 No peny some tyme sche levys therin. 90  
 Tho thou gete more than other thre,  
 Thryfty man he canne not be.  
 3e, 3e, seyð the persore,<sup>1</sup>  
 That [th]at I sey it shall be sure ;  
 Whi chyd 3e.yche one with other ?  
 Wote 3e not wele I ame 3our brother ;  
 Therefore none contrary me,

---

<sup>1</sup> "Piercing-iron," says Mr. Halliwell (*Archaic Dictionary* in voce), and cites this passage as an illustration.

Ffore as I sey, so schall it be.  
 My mayster ȝit schall be full ryche ;  
 Als fere as I may stret and streche, 100  
 I wyll helpe with all my myght,  
 Both by dey and by nyght,  
 Fast to runne into the wode,  
 And byte I schall with moth full gode,  
 And thus I trowe be my crowne,  
 To make hym schyreff of the toune.  
 Soft, ser, seyð the skantyllȝon,<sup>1</sup>  
 I trow ȝour thryft be wele ny done ;  
 Ever to crewyll thou arte in word,  
 And ȝet thou arte not worth a tord : 110  
 Ffore all the gode that thou gete myght,  
 He wyll spend it on a nyght.  
 Than the crow<sup>2</sup> byganne to speke,  
 Ffore-why is herte was lyke to breke,  
 To here his brother so revyld,  
 And seyð : thou spekes lyke a chyld ;  
 Tho my mayster spend never so faste,  
 I-nouȝe he schall have at the laste,  
 May forȝeyne as mych as euer schall he,  
 That drynke never peny to that he dyȝe. 120  
 ȝe, ȝe, seyð the rewle,  
 I feyth, thou art bot a fole,  
 Ffore, and he dyȝe and have ryght nouȝht,  
 Who trowys thou wyll gyfe hym owght ?  
 Thus schall he ly upone the grownd,  
 And be beryed lyke an hund :

<sup>1</sup> A carpenter's measure.<sup>2</sup> i. e. a crow-bar.

Ffore, and a man have ought before,  
 When he has nede, it is gode store.  
 What, ser reule, seyð the pleyne,  
 Another resone I wyll the seyne ; 130  
 Thoff my mayster have no happe,  
 Ȝit thi mayster thou schudyst not lake ;  
 Ffore Ȝit a mene I schall se,  
 That my mayster schall wele the :  
 I schalle hym helpe, both dey and nyght,  
 To get hym gode with all my myght,  
 I schalle clens on every syde  
 To helpe my mayster in his pride.  
 The brode ax seyð withouten mysse,  
 He seyð : the pleyne my brother is ; 140  
 We two schall clence and make full pleyne,  
 That no man schall us geyne-seyne,  
 And gete oure mayster in a ȝere  
 More sylver than a man may bere.  
 Ȝe, Ȝe, seyð the twyvete,  
 Thryft I trow be fro ȝour fette,  
 To kepe my mayster in his pride ;  
 In the contré Ȝe canne not byde,  
 Without Ȝe stele and be thefys,  
 And put meny mene to greffys : 150  
 Ffore he wyll drynke more in a houre  
 Than two men may gete in fowre.  
 When Ȝe have wrouȝht alle that Ȝe canne,  
 Ȝit schalle he never be thryfty mane.  
 Than be-spake the polyff,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pulley.

With gret stronge wordes and styffe :  
 How, ser twyfet, me thinke 3ou grevyd ;  
 What devylle, who hath 3ou thus mevyd ?  
 Thof he spend more in a 3ere  
 Off gold and sylver than thou may bere, 160  
 I schall hym helpe with all my myght ;  
 I trow to make hym 3et a knyght.  
 What, ser, seyde the wyndas<sup>1</sup> rewle,  
 Me thynke thou arte bot a fole :  
 Ffore thou spekes oute of sesone,  
 He may not the therfore by resone ;  
 A carpenter to be a knyght,  
 That was ever ageyne ryght ;  
 Therefore I schall telle the a saw,  
 Who so wold be hy3e he schall be law. 170  
 3e, than seyde the rewle-stone,  
 Mayster hath many fone ;  
 And 3e wold helpe [him] at his nede,  
 My mayster schuld the better spede ;  
 Bot what so euer 3e brage ore boste,  
 My mayster 3et shall reule the roste :  
 Ffore, as I ame a trew mane,  
 I schalle hym helpe all that I canne.  
 The gowge seyde : The devyles dyrte  
 Ffore anything that thou eanne wyrke : 180  
 Ffore all that ever thou canne do,  
 It is not worthe an old scho.  
 Thow hast be prentys this vij. 3ere,  
 And 3it thy crafte is for to lere ;

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<sup>1</sup> Anglo-Norman form of *windlass*.

And thou eouthe wyrke als wele as he,  
 ȝet schall thi mayster never the.  
 Softe, ser, seyð the gabulle-rope,  
 Methinke gode ale is in ȝour tope :<sup>1</sup>  
 Ffore thou spekes as thou wold fyght,  
 Thereto and thou hade any myght. 190  
 I schall telle the another tale,  
 My mayster how I schall aveyle ;  
 Hayle and pulle I schall fulle faste  
 To reyse housys, whyle I may laste,  
 And so, within a lytell throw,<sup>2</sup>  
 My mayster gode schall not be know.  
 Than spake the wryghtes wyfe :  
 Nother of ȝou schall never thryfe,  
 Nother the mayster, ne the manne,  
 Ffore nothinge that ȝe do canne : 200  
 Ffore ȝe wyll spend in a moneth  
 More gode than iij. men hath.  
 The squyre<sup>3</sup> seyð : what sey ȝe, dame ?  
 ȝe schuld not speke my mayster schame.  
 Squyre, I have non other cause,  
 I suere the, by Seynt Eustase :  
 Ffore alle the ȝerne that I may spynne,  
 To spend at ale he thinkes no synne.  
 He wyll spend more in an owre,  
 Than thou and I canne gete in fowre. 210  
 ȝit me thinke ȝe be to blame  
 To gyffe my mayster syche a name :  
 Ffore, thoff he spend more than ȝe have,

<sup>1</sup> Head.<sup>2</sup> Time.<sup>3</sup> Square.



ȝit his worschype ȝe schuld save.  
 Mary, I schrew hym and the to,  
 And alle them that so canne do :  
 Ffore hys servaunt I trow thou be,  
 There thou schalle never the ;  
 Ffore and thou lerne that craft at hym,  
 Thy thryft I trow schall be fulle thine.<sup>1</sup> 220  
 The draught-nayle than spake he,  
 And seyð : dame, that is no le,  
 ȝe hafe the maner of this frekes,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thin.

<sup>2</sup> A lusty fellow. Thus, in the Poems of Alexander Scot (written before 1568), we find:—

“The grit Debait and Turnament  
 Off trewth no tounge can tell,  
 Wes for a lusty lady gent  
 Betuix twa freikis fell.”

In the metrical *Morte Arthure* (ed. Halliwell, p. 232), we have:—

“He fonde never no freke myghte  
 Foghte with hym one!”

And a little farther on (p. 242):—

“A freke highte syr ffederike,  
 With fulle fele other.”

It is evident that the substantive *freke*, and the adjective *frek*, are of similar origin and force, and when “great” *freke*, or “strong” *freke* occurs, the terms *great* and *strong* are merely expletives. *Frek* signifies lusty, active, eager. Minot uses it rather frequently in the last-mentioned sense:—

“Both alblast and many a bow  
 War ready railed opon a row,  
 And ful frek for to fight.”

And again:—

“The Franche-man was frek to fare,  
 Ogaines him, with scheld and spere.”

That thus fore my mayster spekes ;  
 Bot lythe to me a lytelle space,  
 I schall ȝow telle all the case,  
 How that they wyrke fore ther gode,  
 I wylle not lye, be the rode.  
 When thei have wrought an oure ore two,  
 Anone to the ale thei wylle go, 230  
 And drinke ther, whyle thei may dre :  
*Thou to me, and I to the.*  
 And seys the ax schall pay fore this,  
 Therefore the cope ons I wylle kys ;  
 And when thei comme to werke ageyne,  
 The belte to hys mayster wylle seyne :  
 Mayster, wyrke no oute off resone,  
 The dey is vary longe of seson ;  
 Smale strokes late us hake,  
 And soun tyme late us es oure bake ; 240  
 The wymbulle spekes lyke a syre :  
 Sevyne pens off a dey is smale hyre  
 Ffore wryghtes, that wryke so faste,  
 And in owre werke have grete haste.  
 The groping iren says full sone :  
 Mayster, wylle ȝe wele done ?  
 Late us not wyrke, to<sup>1</sup> we suete,  
 Ffore caehyng of over gret hete.  
 Ffor we may [happe] after cold to take,  
 Than on stroke may we no hake. 250  
 Than be-spake the whetstone,  
 And seyð : Mayster, we wylle go home :

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<sup>1</sup> Till.

Ffore fast it draw unto the nyght ;  
 Our soper by this I wote is dyght.  
 The lyne and stone, the persere and fyle,  
 Seys that is a gode counesylle ;  
 The crow, the pleyn, and the squyre,  
 Seys we have arnyd wele our hyre ;  
 And thus with fraudes and falsyd  
 Is many trew man deseyvid. 260  
 Therefore, by ought that I canne se,  
 They schall never thryve ne the ;  
 Therefore the craft I wylle go froo,  
 And to another wylle I goo.  
 Then ansuerd the wyfe in hye :  
 And I myght, so wold I,  
 Bot I ame to hym bounde so faste,  
 That of my halter I may not caste ;  
 Therefore the preste that bounde me prentyse,  
 He schall treuly have my curse, 270  
 And ever schall have, to that I dyze,  
 In what contré that ever he be.  
 Therefore, wryztes, take hede of this,  
 That ze may mend that is amysse,  
 And treuly that ze do zour labore :  
 Ffore that wylle be to zour honour ;  
 And greue zou nothinge at this songe,  
 Bot ever make mery zour selue amonge.  
 Ne zet at hym that it dud make,  
 Ne envy at hym ze take, 280  
 Ne none of zou do hym blame,  
 Ffore-why the craft hath do hym schame  
 By mo weys than two ore thre,

Thus seys the boke serteynlye.  
God, that is both gode and hend,  
Gyff 3ou grace, that 3e may mend,  
And brynge us alle unto his blysse,  
That never fro us [it] schall mysse.

Amen. qd. Rate.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The copyist.





## Colyn Blombols Testament.

THIS remarkable relic has been printed in Mr. Halliwell's *Nugæ Poeticæ*, 1844. The original, which is coarsely written, is preserved in MS. Rawlinson, C. 86, fol. 106, *verso*, in the Bodleian, and is now given from that source. The text of 1844 presents several inaccuracies.

Poems written on this plan were formerly rather common, partly because it afforded a convenient and ready vehicle for satirical or comic treatment, and partly, of course, because when it was first introduced into modern literature, it possessed the charm of novelty. Mr. Halliwell has remarked the similarity of design and character between this production and the *Testament of Andro Kennedy*, 1508, 4°, and perhaps its composition may be referred to the same period.

There are several productions of a similar character in our language, of which the following may be instanced:—“1. *Wyll Bucke His Testament*, by John Lacy, printed by W. Copland, n. d., 4°; 2. *The Will and Testament of the Hare*, printed (I think) in the English *GESTA ROMANORUM*; 3. *Jyl of Braintford's Testament*, written and printed by Robert Copland, n. d., 4°; 4. *The Last Wyll and Testament of Dan Bartholomew of Bath*, printed in Gascoigne's *Posies*, 1575, 4°.

Here foloweth Colyn Blowbols<sup>1</sup> Testament.

HAN that Bachus, the myghti lorde,  
 And Juno eke, both by one accorde,  
 Hath sette a-broche of myghti wyne a tone,  
 And after wardys in to the brayn ran  
 Of Colyn Blobolle, whan he had dronke a tante  
 Bothe of Teynt<sup>2</sup> and of wyne Alycaunt,<sup>3</sup>  
 Till he was drounke as any swyne ;  
 And after this, with a mery chere,  
 He rensyd had many an ale picher,  
 That he began to loken and to stare, 10  
 Like a wode<sup>4</sup> bole<sup>5</sup> or a wilde mare ;  
 So toty<sup>6</sup> was the brayn of his hede,  
 That he desirid for to go to bede,  
 And whan he was ones therin laide,  
 With hym self mervailously he fraide ;  
 He gan to walow and turn up and downe,  
 And for to tell in conclucioun,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Blowboll* is a *drunkard*. In the new edition of Nares, a passage from Skelton is quoted, in which the expression is used in this sense ; and it also occurs in the third part of the *Image of Ypocrisy*, in an enumeration of priests of ill-fame :—

“ Frier Sloboll  
 And ffrier Bloboll,  
 Frier Toddypoll  
 And ffrier Noddypoll.”

<sup>2</sup> Tent wine.

<sup>3</sup> Wine of Alicante, in Valencia. See note to the new ed. of *Mery Tales and Quicke Answeres*, p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> Mad.

<sup>5</sup> Bull.

<sup>6</sup> Giddy.

Sore he spwed, and alle vppe he kest  
 That he had recevyd in his brest,  
 So that it was grete pité for to here 20  
 His lamētacionne and his hevy chere.  
 An hors wold wepe to se the sorow he maide,  
 His evy countenaunces and his colour fade.  
 I trow he was infecte certeyn  
 With the faitour, or the fever lordeyn,<sup>1</sup>  
 Or with a sekenesse called a knave ateynt ;  
 And anon his herte he gan to faynt,  
 And after ward their toke hym many a throw  
 Of good ale bolys that he had i-blowe ;  
 He lokyd furyous as a wyld catt, 30  
 And pale of hew like a drowned ratte ;  
 And in his bake their toke hym one so felle,  
 That after ward folowed a very stynkyng smell,  
 That for to cast was more vnholysam  
 Than *aurum potab[i]le* or *aurum pimentum*.  
 And whan his angwyssh some what gan apese,  
 He recovered of his dronken dessese ;  
 He set hym vppe and sawe their biside  
 A sad man, in whom is no pride,  
 Right a discrete confessour, as I trow, 40  
 His name was called sir John Doclow ;

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<sup>1</sup> Idleness. See Mr. Halliwell's *Archaic Dictionary*, art. LORDEYN, where this passage is quoted. In *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*, Idleness says:—

“I am allwayes troubled with the *litherlurden* :  
 I loue so to liger—”

Here “lither-lurden” has the same meaning as the “fever-lordeyn” of the present poem.

He had commensed in many a worthier place  
 Then ever was Padow, or Boleyne de Grace ;<sup>1</sup>  
 Of so grete reverens werre the universities,  
 That men toke entrie knelyng on their knees ;  
 In suehe places his fader for hym had ben,  
 Whate shuld I tell you ? ye wotte where I mene.  
 And yet in phisike he cowth no skylle at alle,  
 Whiehe men eallen baas naturalle ;  
 Good drynke he lovyd better than he did wepit,      50  
 Men called hym maister John-with-the-shorte-tipet.<sup>2</sup>  
 Hereby menne may welle understonde and see,  
 That in seolys he had take degré,  
 And was welle laboured in the rough byble,  
 Ffor he loved in no wise to be idele ;  
 An able man to be aboute a pope,  
 Because he coude a conseiencie so welle grope,  
 And make an man to bryng out his mynde  
 Every thing that he had left behynde.  
 He gaf me many a good eertaecion,      60  
 With right and holsom predicaecion,  
 That he had laboured in Venns secrete celle,  
 And me exponyd many a good gossepelle,  
 And many a right swete epistell eke,  
 In hem perfite and not for to seke ;  
 And he had them i-lerneid and i-rade,  
 And alle were good, I trow their were none bade.

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<sup>1</sup> Bologna.

<sup>2</sup> An early example of the practice of giving long and fantastic names, which at a later period became so common among the Puritans.



And right like an hevynly instrument  
Unto me ever his tounge weute,  
It was joie for to here and see 70  
The fructuons talkyng that he had to me ;  
He behavyd hym so lich a gostly leeche,  
Both in countenaunce and in his speche,  
And bad I shuld, by cause I was seke,  
Unto Lucina and to Ciraa eke  
My soule byqueth, or I hens deperte,  
As I wold have his prayers after ward.  
He promysyd me also, that he wold syng  
Foure devote masses at my biryng,  
On of Bachus, anothir of Lucina, 80  
The third of Juno, the fourth of Ciria,  
And at Venus temple with grette devocion,  
I have to you so grette dilection ;  
And for my soule ryng many a mery pele,  
In Venus temple and eke in hir chapelle,  
And also in many an othir holy stede,  
Where Spade may not helpe women at ther nede ;  
And bad me eke be of right good chere  
Alle the wyle I shold abyde here,  
And for any thing that he coude feelee, 90  
That was in me, I sholde do right wele.  
And yet he said : Be myne avisment,  
Withoute taryng ye make your Testament,  
And by good avice alle thing welle besett,  
Loke ye do soo : for ye shalle fare the bette ; <sup>1</sup>  
Whylis ye have your right memorie,

---

<sup>1</sup> Better.

Calle unto you your owne secretory,  
 Maister Grombold, that cane handelle a pen,  
 For on booke he skrapith like an hen,  
 That no man may his letters know nor se, 100  
 Allethough he looke trughe spectacles thre.  
 Lete such a man writte your Testament,  
 For he shalle best folow your entent.

In Bachus Nomine, Amen!

I Colyn Blowbolle, all thinges to fulfille,  
 Wol that this be my last welle:  
 First, I bequeth my goost that is bareyn,  
 Whan it is depertid from the careyne,<sup>1</sup>  
 Unto the godesse called Lucina,<sup>2</sup> 110  
 And to hir sustir called Ciria;  
 For Lucina hath the governale

---

<sup>1</sup> Flesh.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* Diana. This deity, whose name is generally associated with the chase and the moon, had evidently, even among the ancient Greeks, no definite province or functions, but was regarded as the goddess of nature. See Keightley's *Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy*, ed. 1854, p. 114, *et seq.* The same view of her character was adopted by Fulgentius and other early Christian writers, from whom our own poets of the Chaucerian era appear to have derived their knowledge of the subject. Thus Chaucer himself, in the *Frankleyn's Tale* (Works, by Bell, ii. 236), puts into the mouth of Aurilius the following expression in a passage where that individual is invoking the aid of Phœbus:—

“ Your blisful suster, Lucina the schene,  
 That of the see is chief goddes and qwene,  
 Though Neptunus have deite in the see,  
 Yit emperes aboven him is sche.

Of the salt flodes, wher many a ship doith saile,  
 And ofentymes ther they gone to wrake ;  
 That causeth the stormes and the wawes blake ;  
 And Ciria eke, as Fulgenes tellys,<sup>1</sup>  
 Abideth moste in flodis and spring wellys.  
 And for be cause I have sette my plesaunce  
 In plenté of drynke, I shalle haue in penaunce  
 To dwelle in wayters as for a purgatory,  
 Whan I deperte from this world transetory,<sup>2</sup>  
 Unto the tyme, that Dyane of hir grace  
 List ordeyn me an other dwellyng place ;  
 But every sin must have his purgacion

120

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And just in the same way, Dunbar, in his "Birth of Antichrist" (*Poems*, ed. Laing, i. 36), speaks of her attributes:—

"Lucina, schynnyng in silence of the nycht,  
 The hevin all being full of steruis bricht,  
 To bed I went—"

It is scarcely necessary to observe that *Lucina* is also one of the appellations of Juno.

<sup>1</sup> St. Fulgentius; b. *circa* A. D. 1164. The date of his death does not seem to be known with certainty. His works were printed very often; but the best edition is that of Paris, 1684, 4°.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Andro Kennedy, in his *Testament* (Dunbar's *Poems*, ed. Laing, i. 137), disposes of himself in a more judicious and thoughtful manner, as follows:—

"Nunc condo testamentum meum,  
 I leiff my saull for evermair,  
 Per omnipotentem Deum,  
 In to my Lordis wyne cellair,  
 Semper ibi ad remanendum  
 Quhill domisday, without dissever,  
 Bonum vinum ad bibendum,  
 With sueit Cuthbert that luffit me never."

Here or in an nothir habitacion.  
 And for the swete wyne that arn so myghti,  
 In whom I have sette alle my glorie,  
 Therefor of right it must nedis be thus,  
 My soule to dwelle in waters troublous,  
 That ben salt and bitter for taste,  
 And them to take as for my repaste ;  
 Ffor of right, and as old bookes doon trete, 130  
 Sharpe sawee was ordeigned for swete mete.  
 And I bequeth also my wrecehid eors,  
 Whiehe of the soule gafe litelle fors,  
 In the temple of Baehus to have his sepulture,  
 That alwey hath done his best eure,  
 To serve hym best with alle his hole entent,  
 Erly and late and ay right diligent ;  
 The eause why I shalle to you devyne,  
 Ffor Baehus<sup>1</sup> is ealled the god of wyne :  
 And for that licour is so presious, 140  
 That oft hath made [me] dronke as any mous,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MS. has *Bichus*.

<sup>2</sup> Ritson, in his *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, i. 70, has a "Song upon the Man in the Moon," in which almost the precise expression in the text is found:—

"Drynke to hym deorly of fol god bous  
 Ant oure dame Douse shal sitten hym by,  
 When that he is *dronke ase a dreynt mous*,  
 Thenne we schule borewe the wed ate bayly."

Such phrases as "drunk as an ape," "drunk as a swine," are very common in early satirical poetry. Taylor, the Water-poet, in his *Brood of Cormorants*, uses the expression, "drunk as a rat." The following story, which is found in the English *Gesta Romanorum*, ed. Madden, p. 408-9, may possibly have some con-

Therfor I wille that ther it beryd be  
 My wrecchid body afore this god, pardé,  
 Mighti Bachus, that is myn owen lorde,  
 Without variaunce to serve hym, or discorde.  
 And after that another throw hym toke,  
 And therwith alle his body alle to-shooke,  
 Lyke as a fever that bernned hym so hote,  
 And was to hym grete payne, I wote ;  
 And other whiles such a f . . . he lete, 150  
 That men wend verely he had shete ;  
 Thier ys no storme ne tempest ay doth lest ;  
 But also sone as his anwhushe was past,  
 He procedid to performe his wille :  
 And byqueth, as it was right and skille,  
 Unto the abbasse of this monestary,  
 I mene of Bachus, that myghti lorde in glorie ;

---

nection with the present phrase, and forms, at any rate, a curious illustration of the subject:—"A mouse on a tyme felle into a barrelle of newe ale that spourgide, ande myght not come oute. The cate come beside, and herde the mouse crie in the barne, 'pepe! pepe!' for she myght not come oute. The cate seide: 'Why cries thou?' The mouse seide: 'For I may not come oute.' The cate saide, 'If I delyuer the this tyme, thou shalte come to me when I calle the.' The mouse seide: 'I graunte the to come when thou wille.' The cate seide: 'Thou muste swere to me.' Ande the mouse sware to kepe couenaunte. Then the cate with his fote drew oute the mouse, ande lete hym go. Afterwarde the cate was hongry, ande come to the hole of the mouse, ande callede, ande bade hire come to hym. The mouse was aferde, ande saide: 'I shalle not come.' The cates aide: 'Thou haste made an othe to me, for to come.' The mouse saide: 'Brother, I was dronkyne when I sware, ande therfore I am not holdyne to kepe myne othe.' "

Alas Sloth, that devoute woman,  
 Whiche hath the propreté of a swan,  
 Evyr to be in plenté of licour,<sup>1</sup> 160  
 And in the morenyng by viij. was his houre  
 To be as dronke as any swyne,  
 With wyne, or ale, or some licour devyne,  
 And to her sustres of that condiciomn,  
 Wheir ever they dwelle, in citie or in towne,  
 Alle the londys and possessions  
 That I have lying within the bowns  
 Of Southwerke and of the stwes syde,<sup>2</sup>  
 As wynde-melles and water-milles eke,  
 With alle their purtenaunces lying on every syde, 170  
 That be there redy and ar not for to seke,  
 Sufficent i-nough, yf they were alle told,  
 Ffor to serve many a grete houshold,  
 By a charter to have and to hold,  
 Under my scale of lede made the mold,  
 And written in the skyne of swyne,<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Swans were generally served up at the tables of those who could afford such luxuries (as they were formerly thought), swimming in a broth or liquor. Thus W. S., in the *Poems of Ben Johnson Junior*, 1672, p. 3, describes a banquet, and speaks, *inter cetera*, of—

“Fat venison pasties smoaking, ’tis no fable,”  
 and tells us how—

“Swans in their broath came swimming to the table.”

<sup>2</sup> Southwark was formerly the great seat of the stews of the metropolis, which were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Winchester, and were subject to fixed regulations. An early MS. copy of these rules is in the Bodleian library.

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* pigskin.

What that it is made in parehemynce,  
 Be cause it shuld perpetually endure,  
 And unto them be both stable and sure,  
 Sauf only a certeyn quyte-rent, 180  
 Which that I have gevyn with good entent  
 To pay for me, unto my confessour,  
 That called is a man of grette honoure,  
 At the stewes side and their fast by,  
 To have an hous and dwelle therin yerely;  
 And to be paid of penaunce ten or twelve,  
 As good livers as he is hym selfe,  
 To fete it their, whan he hath need therto:  
 It is my wille right evyn that it be so;  
 And of this rent, yf that he doith faile, 190  
 I gyve hym powre to skore on the tale,  
 And take an[d] stresse,<sup>1</sup> yf that nede be,  
 Upon the grounde, one, two, or thre,  
 And with hym home his stressis fo[r] to eary,  
 And in his chamber to make them for to tary,  
 Tille he be paid fully of the quyte-rent,  
 And wel i-plesid after hys owyn entent.  
 And at his forsaid charter maykyng,  
 And also at the possession takyng,  
 Alle good drynkers that any where may be hade, 200  
 With braynles people and other that ben made,  
 Shuld be at doing of this dede.  
 The blissing of Bachus I graunte hym to mede,  
 To be wittness of this cha[r]ter sealyng.  
 Be cause I wold they shold for no thing

---

<sup>1</sup> Distrain.

Be interupt of their possessouns,  
 That I have gyve them lying in the bounss  
 Of Southewerke and of the stweys syde,  
 But evermore with them to abyde ;  
 To make them haue the mor devocion 210  
 Ffor me to say many an orison,  
 On nightes specially whan other men do wy[n]ke,  
 By cause I sette my plesaunce in good drynke.  
 And I byqueth unto my secerytory,  
 Regestered a brother in the order of foly,<sup>1</sup>  
 Ffor his labour and his diligence,  
 Six marke of pruce to have for his dispenche,  
 To this entent, that he bistow it shalle  
 Upon good drynk, and on no mete at alle ;  
 My custum ever hath ben to doo soo, 220  
 It is my will that he shuld the same [doo].  
 And I bequeth, yef that I dey shalle,  
 Ffor to hold my fest funeralle,  
 An hundredth marke of pruce money fyne,  
 Ffor to bistow upon bred and wyne,  
 With other drynkys that dilicious be,  
 Whiche in ordre hereafter ye shall se.  
 And for to be at this fest funeralle,  
 I will have called in generalle  
 Alle the<sup>2</sup> that ben very good drynkers, 230  
 And eke also alle feoble swyvers,  
 And they also that can lyft a bole,  
 Tille that the drynke hath take them by the polle ;

<sup>1</sup> In 1569, licence was given to print a ballad called *the XX Orders of Fools*. See Collier's Extracts from the *Reg. Stat. Co.*, i. 224.

<sup>2</sup> MS. has tho.



And they also that ben dronkyn wyee,  
 And othir that aru dronken fooles nyee;  
 And many drōkeu people shalbe there,  
 And none of these may fayle at this dyuer.  
 And for to s[o]moun alle them to this fest,  
 The baily of Ro[y]ston therto is the beste;  
 Sauf I wille have after myn owyn entent, 240  
 An hous for them, that is convenient,  
 And it shalbe Didalus is hous.<sup>1</sup>  
 And every mau shalbe as drownke as any mous,  
 Or any of them from this fest passe.  
 And for to telle how this hows maide was,  
 Ther werre thereto sevynty and sevin  
 Of dores iu nombre, as poets doo nevin,<sup>2</sup>  
 And he that was ones entered in,  
 Coulede fynde no wey out for to wyn,  
 Till that he com yn to a gardeyn, 250  
 And their he shuld fynd in certeyn  
 A clew of yern,<sup>3</sup> and therto he must wynd,  
 And thereof take a thred by the ende,  
 And make a knot about hys fynger with alle,  
 And with the thred wynd hym oute he shalle,  
 But othre wise myght no man oute wyne,  
 After that he was ones entered in.

---

<sup>1</sup> The labyrinth built by Dædalus for Minos, King of Crete.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is more particularly, no doubt, to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; but the story is also found in Apollodorus and elsewhere. *To nevin*, or *nevene*, is "to name or speak."

<sup>3</sup> The clue, by which alone the mazes of the labyrinth could be threaded. Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, having given this clue to Theseus, the latter succeeded in killing the Minotaur.

And for be cause so many dores be  
 Unto the hous, and so fer entré,  
 Me thingith therfore, as by my jugement, 260  
 This is a hous for them most convenient.  
 But whan all folk ones be entrid in,  
 I will these people the high borde begyn,  
 Tho specially that arn drōken wise,  
 People most able, after myne avise,  
 To sett their among alle other thing  
 To make them wise in ther owyn talkyng,  
 And wenith thir wittes be be yonde the mone,  
 And medle of thynges, that they have nought to done,  
 And deme them self as wise, withoute lees, 270  
 As ever was Aristotle, Plato, or Socrates ;  
 And their thinges begyne to lye,  
 Ffor than they ben as dronke-lyight as a flye,  
 And wille telle of thinges that have be done,  
 Where as never shyneth sone ne mone.  
 I wille therfor, for myn honesty,  
 At the hy dees<sup>1</sup> these people sette be.  
 And to begin also the secounde table,  
 I wille ther be honest men and able,  
 Such as wilbe as drongen as an ape,<sup>2</sup> 280  
 And they wille skoff now, and jape,  
 And be also as fulle of nyee toyes,  
 As ben yong childern or elis wantown boyes ;  
 And they whiche also both gape and gren,  
 Like the . . . of a squirtyng hen.  
 And in suche caas often tymes they be,

---

<sup>1</sup> Dais.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 98, note 2.

That one may make them play with strawes thre,<sup>1</sup>  
 And be as nyee in a mannys hous,  
 As is a eatt playing with a mous,  
 Therfor I wille [not] this people sett there, 290  
 A place ther is for them elleswhere.  
 The thirde table shal be gyne<sup>2</sup> as tyte,  
 They that be manly in dronkenesse for to fyte,  
 Whan one ther hede is sett a barly-hate,  
 Than arn they as manly as a ganat,  
 And than they wille kylle every fle and lous,  
 And in ther way bydith nodir ratte ne mous ;  
 They will kylle in that grete hete  
 Huge Golyas,<sup>3</sup> with their wordis grete,  
 And also the grete Gogmagog, 300  
 Creseed<sup>4</sup> worme and the water ffrog.  
 Than they begyn to swere and to stare,  
 And be as braynles as a Marshe hare,<sup>5</sup>  
 When they have one their habergon of malt,  
 They wene to make many a man to halt,  
 Efor they be than so angry and so wraw,<sup>6</sup>  
 And yet they wille stombile at a straw.  
 And every table shalle fulfilled be  
 [Wyth] men of worship and men of honesté ;  
 After that they shalbe servyd wele, 310

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<sup>1</sup> MS. has *yere*. There is a nursery rhyme:—

“ Three straws on a staff,  
 Would make a baby cry and laugh.”

<sup>2</sup> In the MS. *begin* is always divided into two words.

<sup>3</sup> Goliah. <sup>4</sup> Crested.

<sup>5</sup> “ As mad as a March hare,” is still a proverb.

<sup>6</sup> Wrath.

Bute of drynke and mete never a dele.  
 And wille theire be supervysours,  
 With officers, as conyng surveyours,  
 Bakers, bruers, and buttelers of the best,  
 Tene them of brede and drynke, ne they rest,  
 Tille every man have plenté and sufficiance,  
 Of mete and drynk right large abundaunce ;  
 Som to serve, and some for to sew<sup>1</sup>  
 Them brede and drynke, as they sit a-rew ;  
 And what with gestes and with servauntes eke, 320  
 I trow their shalbe an honeste felowship.  
 Sauf first shalle they of ale have new bake bonns,  
 With stronge ale bruen in fattes<sup>2</sup> and in tonnes,  
 Pyng, Drangolle, and the Braget fyne,  
 Methe, Mathebru, and Mathelynge,  
 Rede wyn, the claret, and the white,  
 With Teynt and Alycaunt, in whom I delite ;  
 Wyn ryvers and wyn sake also,  
 Wyne of Langdoke and of Orliaunce therto,  
 Sengle bere, and othire that is dwobile, 330  
 Which causith the brayn of man to trouble ;<sup>3</sup>  
 Spruce beer, and the beer of Hambur,  
 Whiche makyth oft tymes men to stambur ;<sup>4</sup>  
 Malmasyes, Tires, and Runneys,

---

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* to taste the meat at table before the guests partook of it.

<sup>2</sup> Vats.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide supra*, line 6, and note. In the *Squyr of Low Degre*, re-edited from Copland's edition in the present series, there is also a curious enumeration of the various sorts of wines anciently in vogue.

<sup>4</sup> Stammer.

With Caperikis, Campletes, and Osneys,  
 Vernage,<sup>1</sup> Cute, and Raspays also,  
 Whippett and Pyngmedo, that ben lawyers therto;  
 And I wille have also wyne de Ryne,  
 With new maid Clarye, that is good and fyne,  
 Muscadelle, Terantyne, and Bastard, 340  
 With Ypocras and Pymment comyng after warde.  
 And as for mete I will that goo quyte,  
 Ffor I had never therin grete dylite,  
 So that I myȝt have drynke at my wille,  
 Good ale or wyne my bely for to fille.  
 Also I will eke that John Aly,  
 And his brother Laurens Sty,  
 Be surveyours cheyff at this dynere,  
 And serve oute drynkes, that ben both brith and cleyre,  
 And se that every man have sufficiounce, 350  
 Of alle drynkys plenté and abundaunce.  
 Also I wille that other men ther be  
 To serve the people everiche in degree:  
 That is to say, Robert Otwey,  
 Nicholas Inglond and Robert Horsley,  
 And Colyn Blobolle and Robert Curé;  
 And to gadre in the cuppys grett and smale,  
 Theire shalbe muster William Copyndale,  
 And othir such they ben to few,<sup>2</sup>  
 Theym for to serve, and their dishes to sew. 360  
 And to se alle thinges truly doone  
 After my deth, dwely and right sone,  
 I ordeyn to be my executour

---

<sup>1</sup> The MS. has *Verunge*.

<sup>2</sup> The MS. has *fwe*.

Of my last will, with a supervisour,  
 Aleyn Maltson, to se truly  
 My wille performyd wele and duly,  
 As I have ordeynd here after myn entent,  
 By good avicement in my Testament.  
 And I wille, that supervisour bee  
 Over hym a man of honesté, 370  
 Sybour Groutched,<sup>1</sup> a man fulle discrete,  
 Whiche wilbe dronke with myghti wyne swete,  
 Though he non drynk but semell<sup>2</sup> ones therto.  
 I hold hym mekly therfor to have adoo  
 In suche a mater of so grete a charge.  
 And for their labour I reward them large,  
 Ffor myn executour shalle have xx<sup>ti</sup> marke,  
 And to my supervisour, for his besy warke,  
 And his labour, and his diligence,  
 He shalle have yerely viij marke for his dispencc. 380  
 Thus I Colyn Blowbolle, with good avisement,  
 Make an end now of my Testament,  
 And willyng every man in his degree,  
 Ffor me to pray vnto the deyté  
 Of mighti Bachus, and of myghti Juno,  
 When I hens weynd, that I may com them too ;  
 Whiche have ever be right diligent  
 To serve them best, with alle myn hole entent,  
 And so shalle I doo unto my lyves ende.  
 So pray for me, that I may to them wynde, 390

<sup>1</sup> The English form of *grosseteste*. *Groot* is Dutch for *great*.

<sup>2</sup> Smell.

Whan Antropus<sup>1</sup> shalle twyn a-two the thirde ;<sup>2</sup>  
 And or that tyme no man shalbe d[r]ede,  
 Of the mevyng of my mortalle body,  
 That I may then entre into their glorie.  
 And me remember with your devocion,  
 Hertely with alle your mencion,  
 With som good prayres whan ye upon me thynke,  
 Whiche hath ben ever a lover of goode drynke.

Thow litelle quayer,<sup>3</sup> how darst thou shew thy face,  
 Or com yn presence of men of honesté? 400  
 Sith thou ard rude, and folowist not the trace  
 Of faire langage, nor haiste no bewté ;  
 Wherefore of wysedom thus I counelle the,  
 To draw the bake fer out of their sight,  
 Lest thou be had in reproef and dispite.

Here endythy Colyn Blohollys Testament.

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<sup>1</sup> Atropos, one of the *Parcæ* or Fates, is the personage here intended.

<sup>2</sup> Thread.

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* quire. It here means *a book*.





## The Childe of Bristowe.

THIS beautiful legend has been printed in the *Retrospective Review*, New Series, Part vi., and in the fourth volume of the *Camden Miscellany*, in both cases from the same source, Harleian MS. 2382. But no apology is requisite for once more reproducing so favourable a specimen of early popular poetry; and, indeed, it was felt that the present collection would be incomplete without it. A different version, in longer metre, was printed by Mr. Halliwell in *Nugæ Poeticæ*, 1844, 8°, a little volume of which only 100 copies were taken off, and which is not so well known as it deserves to be.

The story, as printed in the *Camden Miscellany*, presents occasional variations from the copy communicated by Mr. Thomas Wright to the *Retrospective Review*, but none of any moment. Such as there are result, I conclude, from a conflicting opinion on the part of the respective editors in regard to the contractions which occur in the MS., and which are certainly, in some cases, a little perplexing.

The reader will probably detect, in this and the following piece, which is the different version of it just referred to, a resemblance, in respect of structure, to the "Book in meeter of Robin Consience," reprinted in the second volume of the present collection. Here, *the Chyld* supplies the place of Robin, and the father is identical in character with the *Covetousness* of the other production.

Sir David Lyndsay, in his *Dreme*, which was perhaps written in imitation of the *Purgatory* of Dante, evidently had a person or persons of the same class as *the Merchant-prince* here described, in his mind, when he satirized the—



“Mansworne marchandis, for their wrangous winnyng,  
Hurdaris of gold, and commoun ockeraris;  
Fals men of law, in cautelis richt cunningg,  
Theiffis, revaris, and publict oppressaris.”

In the *Gesta Romanorum*, edited by Sir F. Madden for the Roxburghe Club in 1838, there are one or two stories which resemble that portion of the present narrative, which describes the apparition of the father to his child in fire and chains, accompanied by devils, and in the *Visions of Tundale* (ed. Turnbull, p. 5 *et seq.*), the details are pretty similar, heing, in fact, merely the emhodiment of the mediæval and pre-Miltonic conception of demonology.



E that made bothe helle and hevene,<sup>1</sup>  
man and woman in dayes vij,  
and alle shal fede and fille,  
he graunte us alle his blessing,  
more and lasse, bothe olde and yong,  
that herkeneth and hold hem stille.  
The beste song that ever was made  
ys not worth a lekys blade,  
but men wol tende ther-tille;  
therfor y pray yow in this place  
of your talkyng that ye be pes  
yf it be your wille.  
I found it writen in olde hand,  
that some tyme dwellid in England  
a squyer mykel of myght;  
he had castels, tounes and toures,  
feyre forestis, and feldes with floures,

10

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<sup>1</sup> The MS. reads, *hevene and helle*, probably by an error of the scribe, as the rhythm requires *helle and hevene*.

beestis wilde and wight.

To lawe he went a gret while,  
pore men he lerned to begile

20

alle agayns the right ;  
mykel good he gadred togedir,  
alle with treson and dedis lither ;  
he drad not God almyght.

The good he gadred togeder than,  
he had it of many a pore man,  
the most partye with wrong :  
he had a sone shuld be his heyre,  
of shap he was semely and feyre,  
of lymes large and long.

30

So moche his mynde was on that ehilde,  
he rought not whom he begiled,  
worly good to fong ;  
and al to make hys sone so riche,  
that none other myght hym be liche ;  
so ment he ever among.<sup>1</sup>

When the ehild was xij yere and more,  
his fader put hym unto lore  
to lerne to be a clerke ;  
so long he lernyd in clergie,  
til he was wise and wittye,

40

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* at intervals, from time to time. So in a ballad printed at the end of the Shakespeare Society's edition of the *Marriage of Wit and Science*, we have the word in a similar sense :—

“We have so manye lasses to lerne this peelde songe,  
That I wyll not lye to you now and then among—”

For other examples, see Halliwell's *Archaic Dictionary*, *in voce*.

and drad al dedis derke.

The fader seid to his sone dere :

to lawe thu shalt go a yere,

and [it] coste me xx marke ;

for ever the better thu shalt be,

ther shal no man begile the

neyther in word ne werke.

The child answerd with a softe sawe :

they fare ful wel that lerne no lawe,

50

and so y hope to do ;

that lyve wil y never lede,

to put my soule in so gret drede,

to make God my foo ;

To sle my soule it were routhe.

any science that is trouthe

y shal amyttē me therto ;

for to forsake my soule helthe

for any wynnyng of worldes welthe,

that wille y never do

60

Hit hath ever be myn avise

to lede my lyf by marchandise

to lerne to bye and selle ;

that good getyn by marchantye

it is trouthe, as thenketh me,

therwith wille y melle.

Here at Bristow dwellith on<sup>1</sup>

is hold<sup>2</sup> right a just trew man,

as y here now telle ;

his prentys wille y be vij yere,

70

---

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* one.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* held.

his science truly for to lere,  
 and with hym wille y dwelle.  
 The squyer unto Bristow rade,  
 and with the marchaund cownant made,  
 vij yere to have his sone ;  
 he gaf hym gold gret plenté,  
 the child hys prentys shuld be,  
 his science for to conne.  
 The child toke ful wel to lore,  
 his love was in God evermore, 80  
 as it was his wone ;<sup>1</sup>  
 he wax so eurteise and bolde,  
 al marchauntz loved hym, yong and olde,  
 that in that contré gan wone.  
 Leve we nowe that childe thore,  
 and of his fader speke we more,  
 that was so stoute and bolde ;  
 he was avaunçed so hye,  
 ther was no man in that contré  
 durst done<sup>2</sup> but as he wolde. 90  
 And ever he usid usery ;  
 he wold not lene, but he wyst why,<sup>3</sup>  
 avauntage dobell tolde ;  
 tethynges he liste never to pay ;  
 yf parsones and vieares wold oght say,  
 he newed hem eares eolde.  
 Alle thyng wol ende atte laste ;  
 God on hym soeche sekencs east,

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* wont.<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* do.<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* if he knew it, as in modern parlance.

he myght no lenger abyde ;  
but on his ded bed he lay, 100  
and drow toward his endyng day,  
for al his power and pride.  
Then he sent for knyghtes and squyers,  
whiche were his comperys  
in that contré besyde ;  
he seid emonges hem everychon :  
Sires, my lyf is nere gone,  
hit may not be denyed.  
Ther was no man in that contré,  
That his ex[e]ntour wold be, 110  
nor for no good ne ille ;  
they seid his good was geten so,  
they wold not have therwith to do,  
for drede of God in heven.  
He prayed hem, and they seid nay ;  
allas ! he seid, and welaway,  
with a rufulle stevyn :  
after his one sone he sent,  
evyn to Bristow verrament ;<sup>1</sup>  
was thens but myles vij. 120  
The child to chamber toke his way,  
ther his fader on ded bed lay,  
and asked hym of his ehere.  
Sone, he seid, weleome to me,  
y ly here now, as thu may se ;  
my endyng day negheth nere.  
But, sone, thu most be myn heyre

---

<sup>1</sup> Truly, in truth.

of al my londes good and faire,  
 and my lordships ferre and nere ;  
 therfor, sone, now y pray the,  
 myn attourney that thu be,  
 when y am broght to bere.

130

The child answerd with wordes mylde :  
 Ye se, fader, y am but a childe ;  
 discrecion have y none  
 to take soche a charge on me ;  
 by my faith, that shal not be ;  
 y can no skyle theron.

Here ben knyghtes and esquyers,  
 which were your compers,  
 and many a worthy man ;  
 yf y shuld seche on me take,  
 that alle thes worthi men forsake,  
 a fole then were y one.

140

He seid : y have no sone but the,  
 and myn heire thu most nedis be ;  
 ther may no man sey nay.

Moeche good have y gadred togeder  
 with extorcion and dedis lither,  
 alas, and welaway !

150

Alle this, sone, y gadred for the,  
 and thu so sone failest me  
 at my nedeful day.

Frendship, sone, is ylle to triste,<sup>1</sup>  
 eeche man be ware of had-y-wiste,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To trust.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* beware of doing anything of which he may repent when

God wote, so may y say.

Sone, he seid, thu scapest not so ;

that shalt thu weten, or thu go :

he then [seid :] charge y the,

before God thu mothe answe're,

160

and as thu wilt my blessing bere,

myn attourney that thu be.

A ! fader, ye bynde me with a charge,

and y shal bynde yow with as large,

as ye bynde now me :

the same day fortenyght that ye passe,

y charge yow appere in this place,

your spiret lat me se.

For ye have bound me so sare,

now y most nedis, however y fare,

170

do your commaundement ;

therfor y charge yow that ye appere,

that y may se your soule here,

whethir it be saved or shent.

And that ye do no seathe to me,

ne none that shal come with the.

Sone, he seid, y assent ;

but allas that y was born !

that manis soule shuld be lorn

for my golde or rent.

180

Al thyng most ende atte last ;

---

it is done. It is a sort of exclamation. So Gower, in his *Confessio Amantis*, lib. i. :—

“ Upon his fortune and his grace  
Cometh *had I wist* full ofte a place.

God soe he sekenys on hym east,  
that he most nedis go.  
The parish prest up was soght ;  
the gloriose saerament with hym he broght,  
that dyed for mannys woo.  
There he shrow hym with hert sore,  
and eryl God merey evermore,  
as it was tyme to do.  
When God wold, he went his way ; 190  
his sones song was, welaway !  
for hym his hert was wo.  
His sone sought fro toun to toun  
for prestis and men of religioun  
the dirige for to say ;  
an e prestis he had and mo ;  
gret yeftys he gaf hem tho,<sup>1</sup>  
ehargyng hem for his fader to pray.  
Yong ehildren had gret hole,  
and pore wymmen had gret dole ; 200  
that holpe hym not a day ;  
and sitthe [they] broght hym in his pytt,  
as al men muste : thei may not flyt,  
whethir thei wel or nay.  
When thei had broght him in his grave,  
his sone that thoght his soule to save,  
yf God wold gef hym leve,  
al the eatel his fader hade,  
he sold it up, and money made,  
and labored morow and eve. 210

---

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* then.



He sought aboute in that contré tho,  
 where any almes myght be do,  
 and largely he dud hem yeve,<sup>1</sup>  
 wayes and brugges for to make,  
 and pore men for Goddes sake  
 he yeaf<sup>2</sup> them gret releve.

Whoso axed oght, he made here pay,<sup>3</sup>  
 and xxx<sup>ti</sup> trentals of masses he let say  
 for his fadres sake ;

he let never, til he had bewared<sup>4</sup> 220  
 alle the tresour his fader spared,  
 aseth to God for to make.

By that day fortenyghtes ende was come,  
 his gold was gone, alle and some :  
 many one of hym spake ;  
 and al thynges that were mevable,  
 he gaf aboute, withouten fable,  
 to pore men that wold take.

By than the fourtenyght was broght to ende,  
 The child to the chamber gan wende, 230  
 where his fader dyed.

adoun he knelid half a day ;  
 al the good prayers that he couthe say,  
 his fader for to abide.

Betwene mydday and under<sup>5</sup>  
 ther cam a blast of lightnyng and dunder

<sup>1</sup> i. e. give.

<sup>2</sup> Gave.

<sup>3</sup> Payment.

<sup>4</sup> Spent.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Halliwell, in his *Archaic Dictionary*, 1847, states *undern* (or *under*) to be equivalent to 9 o'clock, a. m. In the Romance of *Kyng Orfeo*, *undyre* and *underon* occur in an apparently similar sense.

thurgh the walles wyde,  
 as al the place on fire had be ;  
 the child seid : benedicite,  
 and fast on God he cryde.

240

And as he sate on his prayere,  
 sone before hym gan appere  
 foule tydynges betwene,  
 his faders soule brennyng as glede ;  
 the devel bi the nekke gan hym lede  
 in a brennyng cheyne.

This child seid : y conjure the,  
 whatsoever thu be, speke to me.

That other answerd ageyne :

y am thi fader that the begate ;  
 now thu may se of myn astate ;  
 lo, how y dwelle in peyne.

250

The child seid : ful woo is me,  
 in this plite that [y] yow se ;  
 it persheth<sup>1</sup> myn hert sore.

Sone, he seid, thus am y led  
 for because of my falshed,  
 that y used ever more.

Mi good was getyn wrongfully ;

but<sup>2</sup> it myght restord be,  
 and aseth be made therfore,

260

an e yere thus shal y do ;  
 gef me my trouthe ;<sup>3</sup> y were ago :  
 for til than my soule is lore.

<sup>1</sup> Pierceth.

<sup>2</sup> Unless.

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* pledge or oath. The spirit desired his son to release him from his undertaking.

Nay, fader, that shal not be,  
in better plite y wol yow se,  
yf God wol gef me grace ;  
but ye shal me your trouthe plighte,  
this same day fourtenyht

ye shal appere in this place ; 270

And y shal laboure yf y may  
to bring your soule in better way,  
yf y have lyf and space.

He graunted hym in gret hast ;  
with that ther cam a donder blast  
and bothe ther way gan passe.

The child had never so gret sorwe ;  
he rose up apon the morwe,

to Bristow gan he wende ;

to his mayster he gan say : 280

y have served yow many a day ;  
for Goddes love, be my frend.

My fader out of this world is past ;

y am come to yow in hast ;

y have ever founde yow kynde ;

me nedith a litel somme of gold,

myn heritage shal be sold,

croppe, rote and rynde.

His maister seid : what nede were the

to selle thi thrift so hastely ; 290

it were not for thy prow ?

yf thu any bargeyn have boght,

for gold ne silver care thu noght,

y shal lene the right ynow.

Au c mark yf thu wilt have,

this vij yere y wil none crave,  
 wherfor avise the now ;  
 for yf thu selle thyn heritage,  
 that shuld the holpe in thi yong age,  
 an unwise man art thow.

300

Gramerey, he seid, mayster hende,<sup>1</sup>  
 this was a proffer of a frende ;  
 but truly it shal be sold.

Bettre chepe ye shal it have  
 then any man, so God me save :  
 for nedys y must have gold.

He seid : what is it worth by yere ?

An e mark of money elere :

the stuward this me tolde.

Then shal y gef the iii e pound,

310

every peny hole and round.

The yong [man] seid : y holde ;

Dere mayster, y yow pray,

have here dedis, fech me my pay :<sup>2</sup>

for y most home agayne ;

y have to do in soundre place,

y pray yow of fourtenyht space,

y shal yow quytte certayne.

His mayster loved hym so welle,

he fette<sup>3</sup> hym gold every delle ;<sup>4</sup>

320

than was the child ful fayn.

He toke his good, and gan to go,

and for his fader his hert was woo,

<sup>1</sup> Gentle.

<sup>2</sup> Payment.

<sup>3</sup> Fetched.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* deal, every bit or piece.

that bode in so mykel payn.  
His sone lete crie al aboute  
in churches and markettes, without doute,  
wher his fader dud wone ;  
where his fader dud destitution  
to man or womman in any toun,  
they shuld come to his sone ; 330  
and he shal make aseth thierfore,  
and his good ayen<sup>1</sup> restore,  
eche man his portioun.  
Ever as they come, he made here pay,  
and charged hem for his fader pray,  
in blisse that he myght wone.  
By that the fourtenyht was come,  
his gold was gon, al and some ;  
then had he no more.  
Into the chamber he went that tide, 340  
the same that his fader in dyde,  
and knelid, as he dud ore.<sup>2</sup>  
And as he sate in his prayere,  
the spiret before hym gan appere,  
right as he dud before,  
save the cheyn away was caught ;  
blak he was ; but he brent noght,  
but yet he was in care.  
Welcome, fader, seid the childe,  
y pray yow with wordes mylde, 350  
tel me of your astate.  
Sone, he scid, the better for the,

---

<sup>1</sup> Always.<sup>2</sup> Before.

y-blessid mote the tyme be  
 that ever y the begate !  
 Thou hast relevyd me of moche wo  
 my bitter chayne is fal me fro  
 and the fire so hote ;  
 but yet dwel y stille in peyn,  
 and ever must, in certeyne,  
 tyl y have fulfilled my day. 360  
 Fader, he seid, y charge yow tel me  
 what is moste ayens<sup>1</sup> the,  
 and doth yow most disese,  
 Tethynges and offrynges, sone, he sayd,  
 for y them never truly payd ;  
 wherfor my peynes may not cesse,  
 but it be restored agayn  
 to as many churches, in certayne,  
 and also mykel eneresse ;  
 alle that for me thu dos pray, 370  
 helpeth me not, to the uttermost day,  
 the valure of a pese.<sup>2</sup>  
 Therfor, sone, y pray the  
 gef me my trouthe y left with the,<sup>3</sup>  
 and let me wynde<sup>4</sup> my way.  
 Nay, fader, he seid, ye gete it noght,  
 another craft<sup>5</sup> ther shal be soght,  
 yet ofte<sup>6</sup> y wille assay ;  
 but your trouthe ye shal me plight,

---

<sup>1</sup> Against.

<sup>2</sup> The value of a pea.

<sup>3</sup> Compare line 263.

<sup>4</sup> Wend.

<sup>5</sup> Device, plan.

<sup>6</sup> Again.

this same day a fourtenyht 380  
ye shal come ageyn to your day ;  
ye shalt appere here in this place,  
and y shal loke, with Goddes grace,  
to amende yow, yf y may.  
The spiret went forth in his way ;  
the childe rose up that other day :  
for no thyng wold he lette.  
even to Bristow gan he wynde ;  
there he mette with his maister kynde ;  
wel goodly he hym grette. 390  
When y have nede, y come to yow ;  
mayster, but ye help me now,  
in sorwe my herte is sette ;  
me nedith a litel summe of gold ;  
another bargeyn make y wold ;  
and with that word he wepte.  
His maister seid : thou art a fole ;  
thou has bene at som bad scole ;  
by my feith, y hold the mad ;  
for thou has played atte dice, 400  
or at som other games nyce,<sup>1</sup>  
and lost up, sone, that thou had.  
Thou hast right noght that thou may selle ;  
alle is gone, as y here telle ;  
thi governaunce, sone is bad.  
Then he seid until<sup>2</sup> his maister fre :  
myn owne body y wil selle to the,  
for ever to be thy lad ;

---

1 Foolish.

2 Unto.

bonde to the y wille me bynde,  
me and alle myne to the worldes ende, 410  
to helpe me in this nede.

He seid : how mykel woldest thou have ?  
xl mark, and ye wold foehesave,<sup>1</sup>  
for that shuld do my dede.

I hope that shal my cares kele.  
The burger lovyd the childe so wele,  
that to his chamber he yede.  
xl pound he gan hym brynge :  
Sone, here is more than thy askyng ;  
almyghti God the spede. 420

Gramerey, sire, gan he say,  
God yow quytte, that best may,  
and trewe ye shal me fynde ;  
y have to do a thyng or two ;  
a fourtenyght gef me lef to go ;  
y have ever founde yow kynde.  
He gaf hym leve ; he went his way ;  
but on his fader he thought ay ;  
he goth not out of mynde ;  
he sought alle the churches in that contré, 430  
where his fader had dwellid by ;  
he left not one behynde.

He made aseth with hem echon ;  
by that tyme his gold was gone ;  
they couthe aske hym no mare,  
save as he went by the strete,  
with a pore man gan he mete,

---

<sup>1</sup> i.e. if you would vouchsafe.



almost naked and bare.

Your fader oweth me for a ȝeme<sup>1</sup> of corn—

Down he knelid hym beforn—

440

and y hym drad full sare.

For your fader soules sake,

som amends to me ye make,

for hym that Marie bare.

Welaway, seid the yong man,

for my gold and silver is gan ;

y have not for to pay.

Off his clothes he gan take,

and putt hem on the pore manis bake,

chargyng for hys fader to pray.

450

hosen and shon he gave hym tho ;

in sherte and breche he gan go ;

he had no clothes gay.

Into the chamber he wente that tide,

the same that his fader on dyde,

and knelid half a day.

When he had knelid and prayed long,

hym thoght he herd the myriest song,

that any erthely man myght here ;

after the song he sawe a light,

460

as thow a thousand torches bright,

it shone so faire and clere.

In that light, so faire lemand,<sup>2</sup>

a naked child in angel hand

<sup>1</sup> A measure, apparently representing half a quarter. In "Ercyldouns Prophecy," printed in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, we have "an seme of hwete."

<sup>2</sup> Glittering.

before hym did appere,  
and seid : sone, blessid thu be,  
and alle that ever shale come of the ;  
that ever thu goten were.

Fader, he seid, ful wel is me,  
in that plite that y now se,  
y hove, that ye be save.

470

Sone, he seid, y go to blisse,  
God almyghti quyte the this,  
thi good ageyn to have.

Thou has made the ful bare  
to aqueynche me of mykel care ;  
my trouthe, good sone, y crave.  
Have your trouthe, he scid, fre,  
and of thi blessing y pray the,  
yf that ye wold fochsave.

480

In that blessing mote thu wone,<sup>1</sup>  
that oure lady gaf here sone,  
and myn on the y lay.

Now that soule is gone to blisse  
with moche joye and angelis,  
more than y can say.

This child thanked God almyght  
and his moder Marye bright,  
when he sey that aray ;  
even to Bristow gan he gon  
in his sherte and brecche allone ;  
had he no clothes gay.

490

When the burges the child gan se,

---

<sup>1</sup> Remain, dwell.

he seid then : benedicite,  
sone, what araye is this ?  
Truly, maister, seid the childe,  
y am come me to yelde  
as your bonde man.  
The burges seid anone right :  
me mervayleth mykel of the sight :  
tel me now how it ys.

500

whatsomever ye put me to,  
after my power it shall be do,  
while my lyf wil laste.  
For the love betwene us hath be,  
telle me, sone, how it stant with the,  
why thu gos in this way.

Sir, al my good y have sold ywys,  
to gete my fader to hevenc blys,  
for sothe, as y yow say :

510

for ther was no man but y,  
that wold be hys attourny  
at his endyng day.

Then he told hym furthere  
how ofte he dud his fader appere,  
and eke in what aray.

And now hys soule into blisse  
y sey hym led with angelis,  
almighti God the yelde !

for thurf your good he is save,  
and his dere blessing y have,  
and al my cares be kelde.

520

Sone, he seid, blessid mote thu be,  
that so pore woldest make the,

thy faders soule to save.

To speke the honour may al mankynde,

thu art a tristy siker<sup>1</sup> frende ;

soche fynde y but sildon ;

but fewe sones ben of tho,

that wol serve here fader so,

530

when he is hens gone ;

sectours<sup>2</sup> fynd y many on,

but none soche as thu art on,

by my feith, y leve not one.

Hys maister seid : y shall the telle,

thu canst bothe bye and selle,

here now make y the

myn owne fellow in al wyse

of worldly good and marchandise,

for thy trouthe so fre.

540

Also, sone, y have no childe

myn heritage for to wilde,<sup>3</sup>

goten of my body ;

here y make the now myn heyre

of alle my landes good and faire,

and myn attorney that thu be.

His maister dud hym weddid be

to a worthy manis doghter of that contré,

with joye and grete solace ;

and when his mayster was ded

550

into alle his good he entred,

landes, catelle and place.

Thus hath this yong man kevered care,

<sup>1</sup> Secure.

<sup>2</sup> Executors.

<sup>3</sup> Wield, manage.

first was riche and sitthen bare,  
and sitthen richer then ever he was.  
Now he that made bothe helle and hevene,  
and alle the worlde in dayes sevene,  
graunte us alle his grace. Amen.

Explicit the Tale of the Childe of Bristowe.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is omitted in both of the printed editions, though it is in the MS.





## The Merchant and his Son.

ANOTHER VERSION OF THE CHYLDE OF BRISTOW.

THIS is the version specified in the preceding article. It is the "Chylde of Bristow," with a different title and in different measure. Though included in Halliwell's *Nugæ Poeticæ*, 1844, it is well worth a place here; for it is seldom that, in compositions of such early date, we meet with so much pathos, taste, and beauty of diction.

The original MS. is in Bishop More's collection, in the Public Library at Cambridge, and is marked Ff. ii. 38.

Here foloweth a gode mater of the marchand and hys sone.



YSTENYTH, ye godely gentylmen, and  
all that ben hereyn,  
Of a ryche franklyn of Ynglond a song y  
wyll begyn;

Manyewels and grete tresure, bothe of sylver and golde,  
Hors and nete<sup>1</sup> he had grete plenté, and many a shyp  
in folde,<sup>2</sup>

He had gold and sylver y-nogh leyde up in hys cofur,

---

<sup>1</sup> Here used for *cattle*.

<sup>2</sup> Number.

Yf hys neȝbur had never so grete nede, he wold hym  
none profur :

He was a grete tenement man, and ryche of londe and  
lede :<sup>1</sup>

ȝyt wolde he never in all hys lyfe do no maner almes-  
dede :

Yf ony pore man came to hys place, eyther erly or late,  
He schuld have neyther mete nor drynke, thoȝ he dyed  
ther atc. 10

Yf hys pore neghbur had nede to sylver, he wold hym  
non lenne,

But yf he grauntyd to pay hym ageyn for ix. s. x.

By a gode oblygacion bounde, in cas he faylyd hys day,  
He schulde dowbyll hyt every peny, he shuld not sey  
hym nay ;

He wold ellys prison them full sore, and do them  
mekyl care,

He had never no compascion of hys pore neȝburs fare.  
And he myȝt fynde hys neȝburs beste, cyther in corne  
or grasse,

He myȝt as wele gyf hym hys beste, as pay for hys  
trespas ;

For and a beste come in hys londe, berley, pese, or  
whete,

He wolde have a quarter of corne, thowe the beste toke  
but oon bytt. 20

Yf any man boght of hys chaffere, yn case he had nede  
to borowe,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Lede*, in early English, is found in various significations,  
but here stands as the plural of *lad*, a servant.

He schulde pay the derrer for the loone : thus dydd he  
moche sorrowe.

Hym selfe wolde pay no man for dett, neythyr for olde  
ne newe,

But what he eaght full faste he helde, soeh balys  
dudd he brewe.<sup>1</sup>

Thys ryche man he had a wyfe, a semely woman and  
a feyre,

God sende a ehylde betwene them two, the whyeh  
schulde be ther heyre.

Thys ehylde was borne to Holy Churche, with mekyll  
yoye and game,

There was he crystenyd veryly, and callyd Wylllyam  
hys name.

In tyme of age he wente to scole, that eurtys ys and  
hende,

He cowde hys gramer wonder wele : hys felows eowde  
hym not amende ; 30

He was bothe meke and mylde, as a gode ehylde owyth  
to bee ;

Whan he was eomen to hys age, a godely man was hee,  
And welbelovyd wyth yonge ond olde ; he was full  
gentyll of dede ;

Ther was not oon man in all thys londe, that bare a  
betryr brede.

Hys fadur bethoght hym on a day, these wordys to  
hym seyde hee :

Come hedur, he seyde, Wylllyam, my sone, and here  
what y say thee ;

---

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* such bale did he work.



Thou eanste on boke, my sone Wyllyam, and gramer  
undurstonde,

Y have ordeygnyd for thy levyng tenement, howse and  
londe ;

Thou schalt be an a-per-sey,<sup>1</sup> my sone, in mylys ij. or  
thre ;

Y wolde thou had some fayre syens to amende<sup>2</sup> wyth  
thy degree. 40

I wolde thou were a man of lawe, to holde togedur my  
londe ;

Thou schalt be pletyd with, when y am gon, full wele y  
undurstonde.

A man of lawe, seyde Wyllyam, that wyll y nevyr bee ;  
Y wolde lerne of marchandyse, to passe ovyr the see !  
Yf thou be a marchand, my sone Wyllyam, the sothe  
y can telle the,

I have seyn men bothe ryse and falle ; hyt ys but  
easwelté.

Y wolde have the a man of lawe, thys ys the schorte  
and longe,

Then mayste thou kepe that y leve the, whedyr hyt be  
ryȝt or wronge.

<sup>1</sup> i. e. *A per se*, a marvel, a paragon of excellence.

“That bird of bliss in bewty is  
In erd the only *A per se*.”

*Poems by Alexander Scot*, p. 34.

“Sum sayis his luv is *A per se* ;  
Bot sum, forsuth, ar so opprest  
With luv, wer bettir lat it be.”

DUNBAR'S *Poems*, ed. Laing, ii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> To suit.

Nay, gode fadur, seyde Wyllyam, be yowre bettur  
avyse,

Helpe<sup>1</sup> y had a gode maystyr to teche me marchandyse.  
Then was Wyllyam prentys made to lerne in mar-  
chaundyse ; 50

Hys fadur levyd, as he was wonte, in synne and  
covetyse ;

So levyd he forthe many a yere ; extorecyon he wolde  
not leve,

He endytyd many a man, hys pore neghburgs evyr to  
greve ;

He lovyd full ylle to pay hys tythe, owthyr in mony or  
corne ;

He thoght hymselfe rychest of all : of all other men  
had he scorne.

He lovyd wele, as y yow say, prestys for to endyte,  
Yf he myght gete a mannys gode, he thoght hym  
nevyr to qwyte.

Thus he drofe forthe hys lyfe dayes wyth mekyll tre-  
cherye,

Tyll sekenesse caght hym sodenly ; then wyste he wele  
to dye ; 60

He callyd to hym the gentylmen, the beste in that cuntré,  
He prayed them wyth all hys herte, hys executurs for  
to bee.

When they come in hys presence, they seyde hym  
schortly nay :

For they knewe full wele hys lyfe, how he had levyd  
many a day.

---

<sup>1</sup> Rather.

Then he preyed other gode yomen, and his neyghburs  
alsoo,

They wolde hys excecutors byn, and they seyde sehortly  
noo :

For all the cuntrey knewe full welc, and hyt welc  
undurstode,

That wyth false extorcion he had geton moche of hys  
gode.

Then thys frankleyn hym be-thoght, and sente aftur  
Wyllyam hys sone ;

And as soone as evyr he came, he knelyd, as he schulde  
done, 70

Upon the grownde before hys fadur, and askyd hys  
benysone,

Thou schalt hyt have, my dere sone, fro the fote up to  
the crowne ;

Sone, that<sup>1</sup> y for the sende, thys ys the cawse why :

Thou schalte be myn executur, for y am lyke to  
dye.

Forsothe, fadur, that ys not beste, take ryehe men of  
thys cuntré,

That may all yowre wylle performe ; fadur, take this  
counsell of me.

Sone, all they have seyde me nay, and utturly hyt  
refusydd.

In feyth, fadur, so wyll y, and therfore holdyth me  
excusydd.

I charge the, sone, in Crystys name, thou take on the  
thys dede.

---

<sup>1</sup> MS. has *why that*.

On a covenant, fadur, y wyll, and ellys not, so God  
me spede. 80

And ye wyll do, as y yow say, and me youre trowthe  
plyght,

That ye wyll come and speke with me upon the thrydd  
nyght.

Thys ryche man hys testament made, and schrofe hym  
of hys synne :

3yt wolde he no man restore, for no crafte that myght  
byn,

But all he gaf Wylliam hys sone, to do ryght as he  
wolde.

Then was he dedd and leyde in elay, and dolvyn<sup>1</sup> undur  
the molde.

When hyt came<sup>2</sup> to the thrydd nyght, that he schulde  
come ageyn,

Then was he ledd with fendys blake, that wrought hym  
mooche payne,

Wyth vij. yron cheynys stronge they ledd hym on every  
syde ;

They bete on hym wyth brennyng brondys woundys  
large and wyde. 90

He was brennyng in flame of fyre : for peyne he myght  
not byde,

<sup>1</sup> Past participle passive of *delve*, to dig. Halliwell (*Archaic Dictionary*, art. *Dolven*) explains this word to mean *buried*, which is scarcely an accurate definition ; *dug* being the direct sense, and *buried* only the implied one.

<sup>2</sup> MS. has *come*. Though, in early English, the present is often used for the præterit, the author probably wrote *came*, as *come* is used in the same line in the ordinary manner.

The erthe tremelyd, there<sup>1</sup> Wyllyam stode : so dyd the  
trees stode<sup>2</sup> hym besyde.

When Wyllyam sawe that delefull syght, he knelyd  
downe upon hys knee ;

He preyed to Jhesu hé schulde hym save, and to hys  
modur, mylde Maré :

In the name of God omnypotente, spyryt, y conyure thee,  
That thou do me no harme, but abyde here styлле, and  
speke wyth mee.

Wyllyam, sone, y am thy fadur, in peyne as thou may  
see,

Thus schall y go to<sup>3</sup> domesday, hyt wyll none othyr bee ;  
And at the day of jugement y schall have doubull peyne,  
And [be] easte into the pytt of helle, and nevyr come  
owt ageyne. 100

I charge yow, fadur, seyde Wyllyam, in the name of  
God almyght,

That ye apere to me ageyne thys tyme fourtenyght !

The goste toke up a gresely grone, with fendys away  
he glode ;<sup>4</sup>

Then Wyllyam wente to hys maystyr, no lenger he  
abode.

Here ys a fytt of thys matere ; the bettur ys behynde,  
Ye schall here how gode Wyllyam to hys fadur was  
full kynde.

<sup>1</sup> *There* and *where* are employed indifferently by writers of an early date.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* which stode.

<sup>3</sup> Till.

<sup>4</sup> Glided.

## [The Second Fitte.]



WHEN Wylyyam come before hys maystyr,  
he knelyd on hys knee.

The marchande seyde : Wylyyam, my chylde,  
what tydyngys now with thee ?

Trewly, maystyr, seyde Wylyyam, y am come to yow now  
To selle yow my londys all ; they falle full wele for  
yow. 110

Thou schalt not selle thy gode, Wylyyam, be the coun-  
sell of me ;

Men wyll sey that here therof, that thou art nevyr lyke  
to the.

All thys euntré wyll speke therof, bothe woman,  
chylde, and man,

For to selle so sone away all that thy fadur wan.

Gentyl maystyr, sey ye not so : for all my londe hyt  
schall be yowrys,

Y wyll selle hyt yow frely, bothe townys, hallys, and  
bowrys ;

Y muste nedys selle hyt, maystyr, trewly, wythowtyn  
any lees,

I have levyr that ye have hyt then ony other man, y-wys.

Y wyll not bye hyt eertenly, nor no gode of thyn ;

Y refuse hyt utturly : for hyt schall nevyr be myn. 120

I am sory therefore, seyde Wylyyam, maystyr, that ye  
wyll hyt not have ;

Y muste nedys selle hyt to some othyr man, ryght as  
God me save.

Syn thou wylte nedys selle hyt, seyde the marchand,  
what schall y pay therfore?

A thousande marke, maystyr, yf ye wyll; y wyll aske  
yow no more.

Syn thou wylt nedys selle hyt, seyde the marchand,  
thou schalt have money rounde;

Thou schalt have more then thyn askyng, thou schalt  
have a thousand pounde.<sup>1</sup>

Fare well now, my dere maystyr, and God hyt yow  
forȝylde,<sup>2</sup>

Y schall be hastely at yow ageyn with the myght of  
Mary mylde.

Then Wylliam payde hys fadur dettys, as far as he  
myght here;

To synge for hys fadyr soule he hyred bothe preste and  
frere, 130

He delyd and dydd grete almesdede to many a nede-  
full swayne,

There as hys fadur had done pore men wronge, he  
restoryd hyt ageyn.

The xiiij. nyght was come to ende: the goste muste  
pere ageyne;

Fendys of helle they haryed<sup>3</sup> hym thiedur, and wroght  
hym mekyll peyne;

He apperyd full orybully, but not as he dud before,  
Hys flamyng fyre was away, but all in derkenes was  
he thore:

He was black as any pyche, and lothely on to loke,

---

<sup>1</sup> The mark was only 13s. 4d.

<sup>2</sup> Requite.

<sup>3</sup> Dragged by force. Harry is the same as *harrow* and *herry*.

All for-faren<sup>1</sup> wyth the fyre stynk, and all of smoke.  
 Allas, gode fadur, seyde Wyllyam, be ye not amendyd  
 3yt?

To see yow come in thys degré, nere-hande y lese my  
 wytt ; 140

Y have amendyd all youre mys, as far as y cowde knowe,  
 There on have y spendyd all youre gode and myn, ye  
 may me trowe.

All thys knowe y not, my sone, forsothe as y telle thee,  
 All my gode hyt was to lytyll to make amendys for mee.  
 Fadur, why appere ye thus in black? ar not yowre  
 synnys foryevyn?

Sone, y am lyke to be dampnyd, but if y have helpe  
 thyn.

Fadur, full fayne y wolde yow helpe, with all my herte  
 and myght ;

To put myselfe to begge my mete, bothe be day and  
 nyght.

Sone, y lovyd never to paye my tythe, nor offryng in  
 Holy Chyrche ;

<sup>1</sup> Plagued or annoyed. *To forfare* is strictly to fare badly.  
 In old Scottish, the form *forfairn* is found :—

“He that hes for his awin genyie,  
 Ane plesand prop, bot mauk or menyie,  
 And schuttis syne at ane uncow schell,  
 And is forfairn with the fleis of Spenyie,  
 He wrikis sorrow to him sell.”

DUNBAR'S *Poems*, ed. Laing, i. 107.

In Lyndsay's *Satyre of the Three Estaitis*, *Sensualité* says :—

“How can I help him, althocht he suld *forfair* ;  
 Ye ken richt weill, I am na medecinair.”



Therefore, sone, these fendys blake me moche wo they  
wyrche. 150

Allas, fadur, full wo ys me, that evyr y schulde abyde  
thys day,

To see yow in thys penaunce stronge, and all youre  
gode ys delte away.

But Jhesu, Lord Almyghty kyng, as thou madyst me  
of noght,

And swete Lady, to the y pray, to have my fadur in  
thy thocht :

Moste specyall moder in vyrgynyte, beseche thy sone  
so precyous,

That he on my fadur have mercy, that sufferyth grete  
dolourys ;

And all the seyntyys that ben in hevyn, specially to yow  
y pray,

For my fadur to be medyatour, to helpe hym, yf ye may.

God graunte me grace to do that thyng, that may  
turne hys soule to hele,<sup>1</sup>

And all the holy felaschypp of hevyn [thro] youre  
preyers that he may fele. 160

Fadur, y schall do my parte to helpe yow owt of peyne,  
Yf y schulde leye my selfe to wedd,<sup>2</sup> or that ye come  
ageyne.

<sup>1</sup> Health.

<sup>2</sup> Pawn or pledge. So Dunbar :—

“Sum bydand the law, layis land in wed ;  
Sum super expendit gois to his bed.”

*Poems*, ed. Laing, i. 103.

*Wad*, used by Lyndsay in his *Satyre of the Three Estaitis* (Works, ed. 1806, i. 405), is another form of the same word :—

“I se ane yeoman quhat ever he be,  
I’ll *wad* my lyfe, yon same is he.”

Y charge yow, fadur, seyde Wyllyam, in vertue of  
the Trynyté,

Thys day vij. nyght that ye come ageyn, and speke  
ryght here wythe me.

When thys grysly gost was goon, Wyllyam thoght in  
thys mode

Hys fadur had broght hym up wyth falsely getyn  
gode.

He wente unto hys maystyr ageyne, and knelyd upon  
hys knee :

Welcome, Wyllyam, seyde the marchand, and dere  
weleome to mee.

Y am eomyn to yow, seyde Wyllyam, y pray yow that  
y may spede,

Ye muste helpe me wyth some gode : y had nevyr so  
moche nede. 170

Y holde the noght, seyde the marchand, thou arte  
nevyr lyke to thee ;

Thou haddest a thousand pounce not longe sythen payde  
of mee.

Thou haste pleyed hyt at the dyse unthryfty felaws  
amonge ;

Hyte were almes,<sup>1</sup> seyde the marchand, on galowes the  
to longe.

Thou wylt nevyr thryve, y wott hyt wele, so sone to  
lose thy gode ;

Trewly of me thou getyst no more : y holde the worse  
then wode.

---

<sup>1</sup> Charity.

Now gentyll maystyr, for seynt charyté, y pray yow sey  
not soo,

Hyt ys not loste nor played at the dyse, but put gode use  
untoo.

And therfore, maystyr, for Goddys love, helpe me now,  
y yow beseche,

Y had nevyr so grete nede, ye may knowe be my  
speche. 180

How woldest thou have more money; thou haste no-  
thyng to selle?

ʒys, gode maystyr, seyde Wyllyam, lystenyth, y wyll  
yow telle;

Y wyll selle yow myn own body to serve yow all my lyfe.

What wylt thou have? seyde the marchand, telle me  
wythowten stryfe.

An c. marke, seyde Wyllyam, that muste y have thys  
nyght,

And y wyll serve yow all my lyfe, to yow my trowth y  
plyght.

An c. marke the marchand tolde, and toke hyt Wyl-  
lyam anon;

Wyllyam thanked hym curtesly, and homward can he  
gon.<sup>1</sup>

Than seyde the marchand to hys wyfe, that rychely was  
cladd:

Y am sekur of a goode servand, therof y am full  
gladd: 190

For now have y Wyllyams trowth,<sup>2</sup> that was my gode  
prentys,

---

<sup>1</sup> i. e. began he to go.

<sup>2</sup> Pledge.

For the terme of all hys lyfe to do me trewe servyse.  
Therof am y gladd, seyde hys wyfe, thys tydynges  
lykyth me wele ;  
Wyllyam ys bothe curtes and hende, and trewe as any  
stele.  
Then Wyllyam wente into the cuntré : in every mer-  
ket dydd he crye,  
To whosoevyr hys fadur oght money, that he wolde hyt  
paye sekyrlye.  
Yf any man he had trespaste to, or done hym wronge  
trewly,  
Come to Wyllyam hys sone, and he wyll restore every  
penye.  
He payed hys tythys and hys offryngys f[r]o hym to  
holy chyrche,  
He made hym evyn with every man, as far as he cowde  
wyrche. 200  
There<sup>1</sup> he be-refte pore man ther gode, and wolde them  
nevyr restore,  
Hys sone restored them ageyne, and amendys therfore ;  
And evyr as he money payde, he preyed them specyally  
To pray for hys fadyrs soule, and have hym in ther  
memorye.  
Thus Wyllyam payde for hys fadur, as chylde that was  
gode,  
That gode had he no more, but ryght as he in stode.  
Now tryste y to God, seyde Wyllyam, for<sup>2</sup> my fadur ys  
owt of payne :

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<sup>1</sup> Here *there* is again used for *where*.

<sup>2</sup> That, or for that.

For, as ferre as y can wyt, y have eontentyd every man.  
 Y thanke God that y was borne that y abode thys day ;  
 My fadur ys evyn wyth all the worlde, now dar y savely  
 say. 210

As Wyllyam walkyd thorow a towne, in myddys of the  
 strete,

An olde man wyth eroehys twayne sone there can he  
 mete :

God save yow, my maystyr Wyllyam, seyde the pore  
 man then,

Y have soght yow all thys day, y am gladd now, that  
 y yow kenne ;

Youre fader oght me, whyll he levyd, of mony a  
 eurtesye ;<sup>1</sup>

Now am y comyn to yow therfore, as ye have made  
 yowre erylde.

Allas, alas, seyde Wyllyam, that ye so longe have byn ;  
 All my money ys now goon, y have ryght noght, y wene.  
 What ys the dette ? seyde Wyllyam, telle me in thys  
 strete.

Forsothe, seyde the pore man tho, but for halfe a quarter  
 of whete. 220

Y am sorry, seyde Wyllyam, that y have noght to paye ;  
 But yf ye wyll have my clothyng, ye sehall have hyt to  
 day ;

But my elothys ar not worthe, that y am sorry ther-  
 fore ;

<sup>1</sup> The other version has :—

“Your fader oweth me for a 3eme of corn,  
 Down he knelid hym befor,” &c.

The remnaunt y pray yow to forgyf for now and evyr-  
more.

Y wyll gladly, seyde the pore man, God forgyf hys soule.  
God [may] he thanke yow, seyde Wyllyam, and the  
apostyll Poule.

Y prey yow feythfully, seyde Wyllyam, pray for my  
fadur dere.

Y wyll gladly, seyde the pore man, hertely y forgyf  
hym here.

God [may] he thanke yow, seyde Wyllyam, for youre  
gode herty chere ;

Y pray to God that youre dwellyng [be] in hevyn, hyt  
muste be there. 230

Wyllyam hymselfe allone, ryght evyn abowte mydnyght,  
He herde a voyce of aungels songe, and all the worlde  
was lyght ;

He apperydd in grete gladnesse, as bryght as any sonne.  
All the yoye that myght be hadd thedyr with hym come ;  
Ther were aungels withowten nowmbur, that come  
downe fro hevyn,

Wyth moche myrthe and melodye, forsothe as y yow  
nevyn.

When Wyllyam sawe that ryall syght, in herte he was  
full blythe :

How stondyth hyt, fadur, wyth yow now ? y pray yow  
telle me swythe.<sup>1</sup>

Sone, all the gode thou dalte for me, hyt vaylyd me  
nevyr a dele :

For all that was falsely getyn, and that fonde y full wele :

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<sup>1</sup> Swift.

Tyll that thou thy selfe solde, y was nevyr lowsyd of  
 peyne, 241

For a ferthyng of that dydd me more gode then dyd all  
 myne, certeyne ;

The syllyng of thyn owne body hath broght me clene  
 fro bale :

For thou had no more gode but thy body ; hyt was a  
 graeyous sale.

Thou haste me savydd, and broght to blys fro endeles  
 peyne and woo,

Y blesse the tyme that y the gate and the, where so  
 thou goo.

Y am full gladd, fadur, therof, that evyr y dydd that  
 dede.

Sonne, leve forthe as thou haste done, and hevyn schall  
 be thy mede ;

And y schall pray to God in hevyn that thou may come  
 to me :

For y am safe and go to blys, thou may bothe here and see.

Thus hys fadur yede hym fro full streyght unto the  
 blysse, 251

And Wyllyam yede to hys maystyr to do forthe hys  
 servyse.

When hys maystyr sawe hym come in hys schurte  
 allone,

Wyllyam, he seyde, how ys hyt with the ? thow arte a  
 rewfull grome ; <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Groom is here equivalent to *man*. So Marlowe, in the *Jew of Malta*, act i. has :—

“The needy groom, that never finger’d groat,  
 Would make a miracle of thus much coin.”

Hyt were almes, seyde the marchand, in preson the to  
caste :

For moche gode haste thou loste, and broght unto waste.  
Y had thought to have made the a man, y pray God to  
gyf the care,<sup>1</sup>

Y wyll no more tryste to the, to go wyth my chaffare.  
Maystyr, be ye not dysplesyd : hyt ys not as ye wene.  
Telle me then how hyt ys, and bringe me owt of  
teene.<sup>2</sup> 260

He tolde hys maystyr all the case, for hys fadur how  
he had done ;

The marchand blessyd hym therfore, he was a gracyous  
sone.

He may blesse the tyme that thou was borne : to hym  
thou was so kynde,

A man may seke now all Ynglonde, or soche a frende  
he fynde.

Wyllyam, y have a doghtyr feyre, and sche schall be  
thy wyfe,

Y pray to God, that ye may bothe wyth yoye lede to-  
gedur yowre lyfe.

All thy fadyr londys trewly now gyf y the ageyne,  
And thou schalt have all myn also, when y am dedd,  
certeyne.

<sup>1</sup> *To give care*, as has been elsewhere pointed out, was equivalent to the modern expressions *to confound*, *to vex*, *with a vengeance*.

<sup>2</sup> Trouble :—“Thane the riche Romayns  
Retournes thaire brydilles  
To thaire tentis in tene.”

*Morte Arthure*, ed. 1847, p. 117.

The word has occurred before, and will occur again.



The maryage of them ij. ys made, and weddyd [they]  
byn in fere,<sup>1</sup>

They acordydd evyr so wele to-gedyr, hyt was grete  
yoye to here. 270

The marchand, aftyr in a whyle, grete sekenes can hym  
take,

Then sende he for Wyllyam hys sone, hys executur  
hym to make.

When Wyllyam come before hys fadur, he was full  
dere welcome;

The marchand then to Wyllyam seyde and tolde hym,  
all and some:

Owt of thys worlde, sone, y muste passe, as Goddys  
wylle hyt ys,

And all my goodys frely y gyf the wyth yoye and  
blysse,

To dyspose for my soule, as hyt beste lykyth the,  
And as thou woldyst y dyd for the, y pray the do for me.  
Maystyr, hyt schall be done wyth all my herte and  
myght.

The marchand ȝalde up hys goste, and yede to God  
full ryght. 280

<sup>1</sup> *In fere* is equivalent to *together*. It is a common form of expression.

“Hym for to thanke with some solace,  
A songe nowe lett us singe *in feare*.”

*Chester Plays*, ed. 1843, i. 11.

“They proyned hem, and maden hem right gay,  
And daunceden and lepton on the spray;  
And evermore two and two in fer,  
Right so as they had chosen hem to-yere  
In Feverere upon saint Valentine’s day.”

CHAUCER’S *Cuckoo and the Nightingale*.

Wyllyam hyred for hys maystyr prestys to rede and  
synge ;

To many a pore man gaf he gode, and delyd many a  
schyllyng.

He was a trewe executur, he performyd all hys maystys  
wylle,

And to the blys of hevyn for sothe he broght him tylle.<sup>1</sup>

Then Wyllyam levyd forthe many a yere, tyll God  
aftur hym sende,

Wyth grete skenes was he takyn, and in thys worlde  
made an ende.

He savydd hys fadurs soule, and broght hyt unto blys,

Hys maystys soule also, wyth hys trewe marchandys.

God let nevyr no trewe man have no falser executur :

For he was graciously getyn, and borne in a goode  
houre. 290

To the blys of hevyn God hath hym broght, and set  
hym on hys ryght honde ;

Y prey to God, that he so do every gode man of thys  
londe.

Lythe and lystenyth, gentylmen, that have herde thys  
songe to ende,

I pray to God, at oure laste day to hevyn that we may  
wende.

Amen.

<sup>1</sup> To.



## The Commonyng of Ser John Mandeville and the gret Souden.

THE curious little piece here given is probably the only remaining portion of an attempt, by some anonymous writer, to versify one of the most popular books of its kind—*The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundeville, Kt.* There is, of course, no proof that a metrical version of Mandevile's Travels was ever completed; but, at all events, it seems very likely that parts of the work were selected by an author, whose name has not transpired in connection with such an undertaking, for poetical treatment, and the fragment before us, which is quite perfect in itself, may serve as a specimen of the manner in which he executed his task. As the reader may like to have the passage, of which the lines are a sort of paraphrase, in juxtaposition, it is here subjoined<sup>1</sup> entire:—

“And therfore I schalle telle ȝou, what the Soudan tolde me upon a day, in his Chambre. He leet voyden out of his Chambre alle maner of men, Lordes, and othere: for he wolde speke with me in Conseille. And there he askede me, how the Cristene men governed hem in oure Contree. And I seyde him, Righte wel: thonked be God. And he seyed me, Treulyche, nay: for ȝee Cristene men ne recthen righte noghte how untrewly to serve God. ȝe scholde ȝeven ensample to the lewed peple, for to do

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<sup>1</sup> Maundevile, p. 137, ed. 1839. The concluding portion of the poem seems to be of the author's own invention.

wel; and ȝee ȝeven hem ensample to don evylle. For the Comownes upon festyfulle dayes, whan thei scholden gon to Chirche to serve God, than gon thei to Tavernes, and ben there in glotony, alle the day and alle nyghte, and eten and drynken, as Bestes that have no resoun, and wite not whan thei have y now. And also the Cristene men enforcen hem, in alle maneres that thei mowen, for to fighte, and for to desceyven that on that other. And there with alle thei ben so proude, that thei knowen not how to ben clothed; now long, now schort, now streyt, now large, now swerded, now daggered, and in alle manere gyses. Thei scholden ben symple, meke and trewe, and fulle of Almes dede, as Jhesu was, in whom thei trowe: but thei ben alle the contrarie, and evere enclyned to the Evylle, and to don evylle. And thei ben so covetous, that for a lytylle sylver they sellen here Doughtres, here Sustres and here owne Wyfes, to putten hem to Leccherie. And on with drawethe the Wif of another. And non of hem holdethe Feythe to another: but thei defoulen here Lawe, that Jhesu Crist betook hem to kepe, for here Salvacioun. And thus for here Synnes, han thei loste alle this Lond, that wee holden. For, for hire Synnes here God hathe taken hem in to oure Hondes, noghte only be Strengthe of our self, but for here Synnes. For wee knowen wel in verry sothe, that whan ȝee serve God, God wil helpe ȝou: and whan he is with ȝou, no man may be aȝenst you. And that knowe we wel, be our Prophecyes, that Cristene men schulle wynnen aȝen this Lond out of oure Hondes, whan thei serven God more devoutly. But als longe als thei ben of foule and of unclene Lyvyng (as thei ben now), wee have no drede of hem, in no kynde: for here God wil not helpen hem in no wise. And than I asked him, how he knew the state of Cristene men. And he answerde me, that he knew alle the state of the Comounes also, be his Messangeres, that he sente to alle Londes, in manere as thei weren Marchauntes of precyous Stones, of Clothes of Gold and of othere thinges; for to knowen the manere of every Contree amonges Cristene men."

This performance is preserved in MS. Bodl., E. Musaeo, 160, fol. 111, *verso*. It has already been printed, though not accurately, in *Reliquiae Antiquae*.



ON a tyme, when Ser John Mandevelle  
 In Egipte was in his jorneye,  
 Two zere with the sowdene did he dwelle;  
 Wel beloved he was of hym allewaye.

A lordes doghter, and his ayre ryght gaye,

He offert to hym, if he wald forsake

His fayth and take Machometes laye;

But no sich bargan wald he make.

On a tyme to counselle he did hym take,

And put alle othere lordes hym fro; 10

He sayde: telle me your Cristyn state,

And how they kep theyr levyng tho.

John Mandevelle sayd agayne hym too:

Ryght welle, I trust, by Goddes grace.

The sowden sayd: it is not soo:

ffor your prestes that suld tech vertus trace,

They ryn rakyll out of gud race,

Gyffe ylle ensampille, and lycse in synne;

Off God services of his holy place

They gyf no forse, but gud to wynne; 20

In dronken hed and licheresc synne;

Ylle cownsell to princese they geve;

They by and selle by craft and gyn;

Theyr mysord cawses alle myscheve.

The commoun pepille of God thay greve

On holy fests, when they suld pray,

They scke sportes and playse, and tavernes chefe,

In sloth and glotoné alle that daye.

In lichery like bestes ar they,  
     In occar, falshed and robbare, 30  
 Stryf and detraction, suth to saye,  
     Mich perjury and many lee :  
 ffor felle pride disgysed they bee,  
     Now lang, now shorte, for mekille chengenge ;  
 Abowt sich pride is alle ther studee,  
     Agayn ther law and Cristes byddyng.  
 They aught to be meke and of devowt lyvyng ;  
     Ever tru, and ylk an other love ;  
 We know they lost for sich synyng  
     The Holy Land, that is best to prove ; 40  
 We fer not but to hald it to our behove,  
     Als lang as they lefe on this wyse.  
 Neverlesse we know they salle be above,  
     ffor ther better levyng then salle thay ryse.  
 But ȝit they hast not to be wyse ;  
     ffor-thi we trust to hald it lange.  
 Then Mandeville said his hart did gryse,  
     To her us so rebuket of a haythene man :  
 Lord save your reverence, son sayd he than,  
     How cowth ȝe know thes thinges so clere ? 50  
 He sayd : I send theder many man  
     With marchandes, truth tylle enquire.  
 Loo ! Cristyn men, now may ȝe here,  
     How heythen men doth us dispise.  
 ffor Cristes love lat us forbere  
     Our ugly synnes, and radly ryse.  
 Our mede is mekyll in paradise,  
     Yf we thus do ; or elles dowllesse

Depyst in helle in paynes grise,  
 Salbee our set in payne endlesse. 60  
 O! is not this a gret hevynese,  
 So many folke be lost for lakk of faythe?  
 Now, it semys, lowsit is Sathanesse,  
 That sett this ward<sup>1</sup> thus owt of graythe.  
 Saint John in his Apoealipse saythe:  
 Sathanas sal be lowset, and do myche seathe.  
 Surly that may be previd here,  
 That when passit is a thowsand ȝere,  
 ffor agayn Crist and his gospelle clere,  
 The sowden, the Turke, and the gret Caane, 70  
 With Prester John, and alle ther subiectes sere,  
 By fayth and life Crist ar attayn,  
 Alle lust plesure use they playn,  
 Covates and prid, and countes it no syn,  
 He [th]at hase most plesure is best, they sayn,  
 And most joy in paradise salle wyn.  
 About a thowsand yere this did begyn  
 After Cristes byrthe, in most outrage.  
 Sathanase was lowset, and eawsit this syn,  
 Als Saint John did propheey and saye. 80  
 ȝe have hard, how Macometes lay  
 Doth promesse a paradise that cannot bee;  
 But the gret Cane and his subiectes to<sup>2</sup> saye  
 A hevyn they trust to have and see.  
 But wylle ȝe here, how blynd thaye bee  
 By the beryyng of ther gret Caane?

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<sup>1</sup> World.

<sup>2</sup> i. e. do.

ffor so beleveth alle the commontee,

And many mekylle war[s]e eertayne.

When thay salle bery the gret Caane,

Mekylle mete and drinke on the erth they cast,      90  
To fede hym after he be gane :

ffor they thinke the saule it may not faste.

Than the body they bryng unto that place,

Wher he salle ly armet in his wede,  
In a tabernacle or a ease

Right preciose, and by hym his stede,

With sheld and spere, and other wede,

With a whit mere to gyf hym in ylke.

*Finis.*







## Syr Penny.

THE publications of a humorous or satirical character on the subject of the omnipotence of gold are very numerous, and date from a very early period. Mr. Halliwell has printed *A Ballad on Money* in his *Nugæ Poeticæ*, 1844; and Barnfield, in 1598, included among his Poems one called "The Encomium of Lady Pecunia." In 1609, appeared "A Search for Money, or the lamentable complaint for the losse of the wandering Knight, Mounsieur l'Argent, or, Come along with me, I know thou louest money. Dedicated to all those that lack Money." By William Rowley. 4<sup>o</sup>. black letter. In 1668, Jordan, a necessitous writer of the time, and who for some years supplied the literary portion of the City pageants, published a comedy called "Money is an Ass." In 1696, one Meriton gave to the worlde, at his own expense, in a large 8vo, "*Pecuniæ obediunt Omnia: Money does master all things.*" A Poem, showing the Power and Influence of Money over all Arts, Trades, &c."

Of these various productions, SYR PENNY is one of the earliest and one of the best. Two perfect copies of it are known, of which, one among the Cottonian MSS. (Galba, E. 9, fol. 47, b) has been printed in the second edition of Ritson's *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*, 1833; and the other, in the Library of Caius College, Cambridge (MS. Moore, 147, on vellum and paper, xv cent.), was communicated to the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* by the Rev. J. J. Smith. In re-editing the poem, the text of the Cambridge MS. has been principally followed; but large and free use has been made of the other copy, which is often fuller and more correct.

Ritson, in his *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, 1829, i. 134, has included "A Song in Praise of Sir Penny," and has remarked that "the origin of all these pieces [on the subject of *Sir Penny*, or *Money*] is possibly to be referred to a very ancient French fabliau entitled *De Dom Argent*, of which M. Le Grand has given an extract in modern prose."

Mr. Chappell, in his enlarged edition of *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, p. 356, prints a stanza from a ballad in the Roxburghe Collection, entitled "There's Nothing to be had without Money; or

He that brings money in his hand,  
Is sure to speed by sea and land:  
But he that hath no coin in 's purse,  
His fortune is a great deal worse;  
Then happy are they that always have  
A penny in purse, their credit to save.

To a *new Northern tune*, or *The mother beguil'd the daughter*."

Such is the lengthy title of this production. The stanza supplied by Mr. Chappell is as follows:—

"You gallants and you swagg'ring blades,  
Give ear unto my ditty;  
I am a boon-companion known  
In country, town, and city;  
I always lov'd to wear good clothes;  
And ever scorned to take blows;  
I am belov'd of all me knows,  
But *God-a-mercy penny*."

It may be well to add that, when SYR PENNY may be assumed to have been written, the penny was a far more important coin than it is at the present time.



N erth there ys a lityll thyng,  
That reynes as a grete kyng  
There he is knowen in londe ;

Sir<sup>1</sup> Peny is hys name eallydde,  
Ffor he makyth both yong and olde  
To bowe unto hys hande.

Pope, kyng, and emperoure,  
Byschope, abbot, and prioure,  
Parson, preste, and knyzt,  
Duke, erle, and ilk<sup>2</sup> baron, 10  
To serve syr Peny are they boune,<sup>3</sup>  
Both be day and nyght.<sup>4</sup>

Sir<sup>5</sup> Peny ehaungeth ofte<sup>6</sup> menys mode,  
And garreth them do of ther hode  
And to<sup>7</sup> ryse hym ageyn ;  
Men doth hym all obedyens,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not in Cambridge copy.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Cambridge MS. has *boen*.

<sup>4</sup> In the MS. the two last letters of this word have been transposed.

<sup>5</sup> Not in Cambridge MS.

<sup>6</sup> Not in Ritson's copy. Ritson has introduced the word between crotchets to complete the metre.

<sup>7</sup> Not in Cambridge MS.

<sup>8</sup> In Ritson's copy, this and the two succeeding lines read as follows :—

“Men honors him with grete reverence,  
Makes ful mekell obedience  
Unto that litill swaine.”

And full grete reverens,  
That lytyll roende swayn.

In kinges<sup>1</sup> courte hit is no bote  
Ageyn[s] syr Peny for to mote,  
Ffor hys mekyll myȝth;  
He is so wyse<sup>2</sup> and so strange,  
Were hit never so mekyll wrang,  
He wyll make hit ryȝth.

20

With Peny men may women tyll,  
Be they never so strong<sup>3</sup> of wyll,  
So ofte hyt may be sene,  
Ageyn[s] hym they will not chyde,<sup>4</sup>  
Ffor he may gar them trayle syde  
In burnet and in grene.<sup>5</sup>

30

When<sup>6</sup> Peny begynnys to spelle,

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge MS. has *a*.

<sup>2</sup> Ritson's copy has *witty*.

<sup>3</sup> Ritson's copy has *strong*.

<sup>4</sup> In Ritson's copy, this and the two next lines stand thus:—

“Lang with him will thai noght chide,  
For he may ger thaim trayl syde  
In gude skarlet and grene.”

<sup>5</sup> This stanza is followed in the Cambridge MS. by the next but one.

<sup>6</sup> In Ritson's copy this stanza stands as follows:—

“When he bigines him to mell,  
He makes meke that are was fell,  
And waik that bald has bene.  
All ye nedes ful sone er sped,  
Bath withowten borgh and wed,  
Whare Peni gase bitwene.

He makyth them meke that are were fell,  
Ffull ofte hit is i-sene ;  
The nedes are fulle sone spedde,  
Both without borow or wedde,  
There Peny goeth betwene.

Peny may be both hevyn and helle,  
And alle thyng that is to selle,  
In erth hath he that grace ;  
Ffor he may both lose and bynde,  
The pore is ay set behynde,  
There Peny comes in place.

40

[The<sup>1</sup> domes-men he mase so blind,  
That he may noght the right find,  
Ne the suth to se.  
For to gif dome tham es ful lath,  
Tharwith to mak sir Peni wrath,  
Ful dere with tham es he.

Thare strife was, Peni makes pese,  
Of all angers he may relese,  
In land whare he will lende,  
Of fase may he make frendes sad,  
Of counsail thar tham never be rad,  
That may haue him to frende.]

50

Peny is set on hye dese,  
And servd at the best messe,

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<sup>1</sup> This and the following stanza are not in Cambridge MS.  
They are here supplied from Ritson's copy.

At<sup>1</sup> the hygh borde ;  
 The<sup>2</sup> more he es to men plenté,  
 The more yernid alway es he,  
 And halden dere in horde.

60

Peny<sup>3</sup> doth ȝyt well mare,  
 He makyth men have moch care,  
 Hym to gete and wyne ;  
 He garrith men be forsworen,  
 Soule and lyfe be forloren,  
 Ffor eovetyse of syn.

The dede that Peny wyll have done,  
 Without let hyt spedys sone  
 At hys owen wylle.  
 Peny may both rede and gyffe,  
 He may gar fle, he may gar lyfe,  
 Both gode and ylle.

70

[ [Sir] Peni<sup>4</sup> es a gude fellow,  
 Men welcums him in dede and saw.

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge MS. has *and*.

<sup>2</sup> In Cambridge MS. this and the two following lines read thus:—

“ Men honoure hym as a man,  
 Iff he litell gode can,  
 ȝyt he is in horde.”

<sup>3</sup> In Ritson's copy the arrangement of this and the two following stanzas differs considerably.

<sup>4</sup> The seven following stanzas are from Ritson's copy. In the Cambridge MS. the readings are inferior.

Cum he never so oft ;  
 He es noght welkumð als a gest,  
 But evermore served with the best,  
 And made to<sup>1</sup> sit ful soft.

Who so es sted in any nede,  
 With sir Peni may thai spede, 80  
 How so ever they bytide.  
 He that sir Peni es with-all,  
 Sall have his will in stede and stall,  
 When othir er set byside.

Sir Peny gers in riche wede ;  
 Ful mani go and ride on stede,  
 In this werlde wide.<sup>2</sup>  
 In ilka gamin and ilka play,  
 The maystri es gifen ay  
 To Peny, for his pride. 90

Sir Peny over all gettes the gre,  
 Both in burgh and in cetè,  
 In castell and in towre.  
 Withowten owther spere or schelde,  
 Es he the best in frith or felde,  
 And stalworthest in stowre.

Sir Peny mai ful mekill availe  
 To tham that has nede of cownsaile,

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<sup>1</sup> Ritson's copy reads *at*.

<sup>2</sup> Cotton MS. has *werldes*.

Als sene es in assise ;  
 He lenkithes life and saves fro ded, 100  
 Bot luf it noght over wele, I rede,  
 For sin of covaityse.

If thou have happ tresore to win,  
 Delite the noght to mekill tharin,  
 Ne nything thareof be,  
 Bot spend it als wele als thou can,  
 So that thou luf both god and man  
 In perfite charité.

God grante us grace with hert and will,  
 The gudes that he has gifen us till, 110  
 Wele and wisely to spend ;  
 And so oure lives here for to lede,  
 That we may have his blis to mede,  
 Ever withouten end.]

With reson may ye wele se,  
 That Peny wyll mayster be,  
 Prove nowe man of uode ;  
 Peny rydys troen be troen,  
 Ovyr all in ylke a toen,  
 On land and eke on flode. 120

He makyth the fals to be soende,<sup>1</sup>  
 And ryght puttys to the grounde

---

<sup>1</sup> This concluding stanza and the colophon seem to be peculiar to the Cambridge MS.



And fals lawys ryse.  
This may ye find, yf ye wyll loke,  
Wretyn ill without the boke,  
Ryght on this wyse.

Explicit de Dynario yhe magistro.





## How the Wise Man Taught his Son.

THE present moral fable is the prototype of a series of pieces, written both in prose and verse, with the object of conveying instruction from a father to his son. Not more than two MSS. of it are now known. One of these is in the Harleian Collection,<sup>1</sup> and was misdescribed by Ritson as No. 1596, its proper number being 5396; but a preferable text is in a volume preserved in the Public Library at Cambridge among Bishop More's books, and has the press-mark Ff. ii. 38 (or MS. More 690). Of the latter Ritson was ignorant, although the person whom he had employed to transcribe for him at Cambridge, with a view to the publication of *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*, 1791, had occasion to examine the identical MS., out of which he copied for Ritson the poem of "How a Marchande dyd hys Wyfe betray." Such an oversight, however, on the part of one who was not accustomed, perhaps, to the study and investigation of ancient MSS., is not very wonderful; but the fact is that, independently of this point, Ritson's text is by no means so good as it might have been. It seems pretty clear that both the MSS. were the work of a scribe, who was neither careful in transcription nor conversant with the language; and to the errors of the early copyist, Ritson has added a few of his own.

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<sup>1</sup> This MS. is described as "A collection of Ancient Poems, with Some memorandums, dated the 34th year of K. Henry VI. 1456." It also contains an imperfect copy of "How a Marchande dyd hys Wyfe betray."

“How the Wise Man taught his Son” was undoubtedly very popular at the time of its original appearance, and long afterwards, and its success and reputation led, possibly at no great interval, to the production of the piece which follows it in the present collection, “How the Goode Wif thought hir Doughter.”



YSTENYTH all, and ȝe well her

How the wyse man taght hys son ;

Take gode tent<sup>1</sup> to thys matere,

And fond<sup>2</sup> to lere, yf ye con.

Thys song be ȝonge men was begon,

To make hem tyrsty<sup>3</sup> and stedfast ;

But ȝarn that [is]<sup>4</sup> oft tyme yll sponne,

Euyll hyt comys out at the last.

A wyse man had a fayre chyld,

Was well of xv. ȝere age,

10

That was bothe meke and mylde,

Fayre of body and uesage ;

Gentyll of kynde and of corage,

For he schulde be hys fadur eyre ;

Hys fadur thus, yn hys langage,

Tha[g]t hys sone bothe weyll and fayre.

And sayd : son, kepe thys word yn hart,

And thenke theron thyll<sup>5</sup> thou be ded ;

<sup>1</sup> Attention or heed. It occurs in this sense in the *Poems of Alexander Scot*, written before 1568 :—

“Thaj tuke na *tent* thair traik sould turne till end,  
Thaj wer so proud in thair prerogatyvis—”

*Poems*, ed. Laing, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. try.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. trysty or trusty.

<sup>4</sup> This word was not in the original MS., but has been added in a later hand.

<sup>5</sup> So original. Ritson has *tyll*.

ȝeyr<sup>1</sup> day thy furste we[r]ke<sup>2</sup>

Loke thys be don yn ylke stede:

20

Furst, se thye god yn forme of brede,

And serue hym wyll<sup>3</sup> for hys godenes,

And aftur ward, sone, by my rede,

Go do thy worldys besynes.

Forst, worschyp thy god on a day,<sup>4</sup>

And, sone, thys schall thou haue to mede,<sup>5</sup>

Skyll fully what thou pray,

He wyll the graunt withoutyn drede,

And send the al that thou hast nede,

As for<sup>6</sup> as meser longyyth to strech,

30

This lyfe in mesur that thou lede,

And of the remlant thou ne rech.

And, sone, thy tong thou kepe also,

And be not tale wyse be<sup>7</sup> no way,

Thyn owen tonge may be thy fo ;

Ther for bewar, sone, I the pray,

Wher and when, son, thou schalt say,

And be<sup>8</sup> whom thou spekyst oght:

For thou may speke a word to day

That vij. ȝer thens may be for thoȝt<sup>9</sup>

40

<sup>1</sup> Ritson has *Zeyr*.

<sup>2</sup> MS. has *weke*.

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* well. Ritson has altered the word to *well*.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* go to mass.—RITSON.

<sup>5</sup> This is Ritson's emendation, the MS. having *mad*.

<sup>6</sup> *i. e.* far.

<sup>7</sup> *i. e.* by.

<sup>8</sup> *i. e.* of or concerning.

<sup>9</sup> Regretted, in consequence of change of mind or way of thinking. Thus, in the *Interlude of Youth*, circa 1554, Charitè says:—

“What shal it be, whan thou shalt flyt,

For the wealth, into the pyt?

Therefore of it be not to boolde,

Least thou forthink it, whan thou art olde.”

Ther fore, sone, be ware be tyme,  
 Desyre no offys for to bere,  
 For of thy neyborys mawgref,<sup>1</sup>  
 Thou most hem bothe dysplese and dere,  
 Or ellys thy self thou must for swere<sup>2</sup>  
 And do not as thyn offys wolde,  
 And gete the mawgrete her and ther  
 More than thank, a M. fold.  
 And, sone, yf thou wylt lyf at ese,  
 And warme among thy neyburs syt, 50  
 Lat [no]<sup>3</sup> newefangylnes the plese  
 Oftyn to remewe nor to flyt:  
 For and thou do, thou wantys wyt,  
 For folys they remewe al to wyde;  
 And also, sone, an euyl sagne<sup>4</sup> ys hyt,  
 A mon that ean no wher abyde.  
 And, sone, of syehe thyng I the warne,  
 And on my blyssing take gode hede,  
 Thou vse neuer the tauerne;  
 And also dysyng I the forbede. 60  
 For thyse ij. thyngys, with outyn drede,  
 And eomon women, as I leue,  
 Maks zongmen euyle to spede,  
 And fulle<sup>5</sup> yu danger and yn myschese.  
 And, sone, the more gode thou hast,

<sup>1</sup> Injure.<sup>2</sup> MS. has *for swete*.<sup>3</sup> MS. has *Lat newefangylnes*. The word here added has been interpolated by a modern hand.<sup>4</sup> So MS. Ritson, printed *sygne*, which is of course the meaning; but I have preferred to leave the text undisturbed here.<sup>5</sup> *i. e.* fall.

The rather bere the meke and lowe;  
 Lagh not myeh, for that ys wast :<sup>1</sup>  
 For folys ben by laghing knoue.<sup>2</sup>  
 And, sone, quyte wele that thou owe,  
 So that thou be of detts elere ;  
 And thus, my lefe ehylde, as I trowe,  
 Thou mest the kepe fro davngere.  
 And loke thou wake not to longe,  
 Ne vse not rere soperys<sup>3</sup> to late ;  
 For were thy eomplexōn neuyr so strong,  
 Wyth surfet thou mayst fordo that.  
 Of late walkyng follys<sup>4</sup> oftyn debate,  
 On nyȝts for to syt and drynke ;  
 Yf thou wylt rule thyn astate,  
 Betyme go to bed, and wynke.

70

80

<sup>1</sup> i. e. in waste, time thrown away.

<sup>2</sup> Ritson printed *knoue*.

<sup>3</sup> Dessert after supper. "He (the emperor Vitellius) would eat four meals a day, Breakfast, Dinner, Supper, and Rere-banquet or after-Supper."—Leigh's *Analecta*, ed. 1664, p. 101. But Gower has the expression :—

"Than is he redy in the wey  
 My rere souper for to make  
 Of which min hertes fode I take."

*Confessio Amantis*, lib. vi.

It also occurs in Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584, 4<sup>o</sup>, lib. iii., ch. 16 :—"And if this be incredible, then all these their bargaines and assemblies, &c., are incredible, which are only ratified by the certaine foolish and extorted confessions and by a fable of S. Germane, who watched the fairies or witches being at a *rere-banquet*, and through his holinesse stayed them, till he sent to the houses of those neighbours which seemed to be there."

<sup>4</sup> This word was omitted by Ritson.

And, sone, as fur furth as thou may,  
 On non enquest<sup>1</sup> that thou come,  
 Nor no fals wytnesse bere away,  
 Of no manys mater, all ne sum.  
 For better the were be defe and down,  
 Then for to be on eny enquest,  
 That after myȝt be vndur nome:  
 A trewe man had hys quarel lest.  
 And, sone, yf thou wylt haue a wyfe,  
 Take hur for no coueytise, 90  
 But loke, sone, sche be the lefe,  
 Thou wyse bywayt, and wele awyse,  
 That sche be gode, honest and wyse,  
 Thof<sup>2</sup> sche be pore, take thou no hede,  
 For sche schal do the more seruys.  
 Then schall a ryche, with owtyn drede.  
 For bettyr it is in rest and pes,  
 A mes of potage and no more,  
 Then for to haue a M. mes,  
 With great dysese<sup>3</sup> and angyr sore. 100  
 Ther fore, sone, thynk on thys lore,  
 Yf thou wylt haue a wyfe with ese,  
 By hur gode set thou no store,  
 Thof sche wold the bothe feffe and sesse.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Judicial inquiry. Perhaps it here stands for *jury*.

<sup>2</sup> MS. has *schalt*.

<sup>3</sup> Disquiet, discomfort

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* enfeoff and sese. Both phrases are borrowed from the same vocabulary. Chaucer has the form *feffe* for *enfeoff*:—

“Was ther non other broche yow liste lete,  
 To *feffe* with youre newe love? quod he—”

*Troilus and Cresseide.*

And yf thy wyffe be meke and gode,  
 And serue the wele and pleasantly,<sup>1</sup>  
 Loke that thou be not so wode<sup>2</sup>  
 To charge hur then to owtragely;  
 But then fare with hur esyly,  
 And eherysch hur for hur gode dede, 110  
 For thyng ouerdon vnskylfully,  
 Makys wrath to grow, where ys no nede.  
 I wyl neyther glos ne paynt,<sup>3</sup>  
 But waran[t] the on anodur syde,  
 Yf thy wyfe come to make pleynt  
 On thy seruandys on any syde,  
 Be nott to hasty them to ehyde,  
 Nor wreth the not,<sup>4</sup> or thou wyt the sothe:  
 For wemen yn wrethe they ean not hyde,  
 But sone they reyse a smokei rofe.<sup>5</sup> 120  
 Nor, sone, be not jelows, I the pray,  
 For, and thou falle in jelosye,  
 Let not thy wyfe wyt in no way,  
 For thou may do no more foly;  
 For, and thy wyfe may onys aspye,  
 That thou any thyng hur mystryst,  
 In dyspyte of thy fantesy,  
 To do the wors, ys all hur lyst.

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<sup>1</sup> In the original the two last letters have been accidentally transposed.      <sup>2</sup> Foolish.      <sup>3</sup> Original reads *praynt*.

This word is added in a much more modern hand in the Harleian MS.; but in the Cambridge copy of this poem, the reading is, "wrethe the *not*." The double negative is of very usual occurrence in early English.

<sup>5</sup> Ritson printed *smokei rose*.



Ther fore, sone, I byd the  
 Wyrehe with thy wyfe, as reson ys ; 130  
 Thof sehe be seruant in degre,  
 In som degre she felaw ys.  
 Laddys that ar bundyn, so haue I blys,  
 That can not rewle ther wyves aryzt,  
 That makys wemen, so haue I blys,  
 To do oftyn wrong yn plyzt.  
 Nor, sone, bete nott thy wyfe, I rede :  
 For ther yn may no help be,<sup>1</sup>  
 Betyng may not stond yn stede,  
 But rather make hur to despyse the.<sup>2</sup> 140  
 Wyth louys awe, sone, thy wyfe ehastyse,  
 And let fayre wordys be thy 3erde ;  
 Louys awe ys the best gyse,  
 My sone, to make thy wyfe aferde.  
 Nor, sone, thy wyfe thou sehalt not chyde,  
 Nor calle hur by no vylens name :  
 For sehe that schal ly be thy syde,  
 To ealle hur foule yt ys thy schame.  
 Whan thou thyne owen wyfe wyl dyffame,  
 Wele may anothyr man do so ; 150  
 [Be] soft and fayre men make tame  
 Hert and buk, and wylde roo.  
 And, sone, thou pay ryzt wele thy tythe,  
 And pore men of thy gode thou dele ;  
 And loke, sone, be thy lyfe,

<sup>1</sup> Ritson printed *rise*.

<sup>2</sup> Ritson printed *the to despyse*, in order to make a rhyme to *rise*, which is not in the MS.

Thou gete thy sowle here sum hele.  
 Thys werld hyt turnys<sup>1</sup> euyn as a whele ;  
 All day be day hyt wyl enpayre,  
 And so, sone, thys worldys wele  
 Hyt fayrth but as a ehery fayre. 160  
 For all that euyr man doth here  
 Wyth besynesse and trauell bothe,  
 All hyt<sup>2</sup> ys, wythowtyn were,  
 For oure mete, drynk and clothe ;  
 Mare getys he not, wythowtyn othe,  
 Kyng or prynee whethyr that he be,  
 Be hym lefe, [or]<sup>3</sup> be hym loth,  
 A pore man has as myeh as he.  
 And many a man here gadrys gode  
 All hys lyfe dayes for othyr men, 170  
 That he may not, by the rode,  
 Hym self onys ete of an henne ;  
 But be he doluyn yn hys den,  
 Anothyr sehal come at hys last ende,  
 Sehal haue hys wyf and eatel then ;  
 That he has gadred another sehal spende.  
 Ther for, sone, be my eounseyle,  
 More then ynogh thou neuyr covayt ;  
 Thou ne wost, wan deth wyl the assayle ;  
 Thys werld ys but the fendys bayte. 180

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<sup>1</sup> This and the three following words are interlined in a later hand, but in one different and older than that which has made other interpolations. The original text has been scored out.

<sup>2</sup> So the Cambridge copy. Harleian MS. reads *All ys*, &c.

<sup>3</sup> In a later hand. The word is necessary to complete the line.

For deth ys, sone, as I trowe,  
The most thyng that certyn ys,  
And non so vncerteyn for to knowe,  
As ys the tyme of deth, y wys;  
And ther fore, sone,<sup>1</sup> thou thynk on thys,  
And al that I haue seyde beforne:  
And Ihesu bryng<sup>2</sup> vs so hys blys,  
That for us weryd the crowne of thorn.

Explicit.

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<sup>1</sup> Ritson printed *so*.

<sup>2</sup> MS. has *brynd*. *Bryng* was Ritson's emendation.





## How the Goode Wif Thaught hir Doughter.

**M**S. formerly in the library of a private individual, and assigned to the reign of Henry VI.

The Northren Mother's Blessing. The Way of Thrifte. Written nine yeares *before the death of* G. Chaucer. London, Printed by Robert Robinson for Robert Dexter, 1597. 12°. [This volume forms part of a book with the following title, and which is usually adjoined to the third edition or issue of Hall's Satires, 1602-1599. 12°.:—"Certayne *Worthye Manuscript* Poems of great Antiquitie, *Reserued long in the Studie of a* Northfolke Gentleman. And now first published by J. S. *Imprinted at London for R. D.* 1597. 12°."]

Sir Frederick Madden, in 1838, printed from the MS. above mentioned a few copies of this little piece for private circulation, and it is said that the impression was limited to five-and-twenty. This point, however, is of very trifling consequence, and the object in introducing it into these volumes was to place so interesting a performance in juxtaposition to its counterpart, the preceding tale, and to bring it more within the reach of those who might be expected to feel a pleasure in the perusal. The former editor of "How the Goode Wif thaught hir Doughter" was not, it appears, aware that it had been printed so far back as the reign of Elizabeth under the title of *The Northren Mothers Blessing*, and it is almost permissible to assume that Ritson was also ignorant of the circumstance.

A second MS. copy of the poem exists in a volume belonging to the library of Trinity College, Cambridge. But it consists of thirty-one stanzas only, and exhibits so many various readings throughout, that it may be almost treated as a distinct production.

In the MS. used by Sir Frederick Madden the two last stanzas are transposed, which is a species of oversight not particularly unfrequent in early writings, and which may be imputed to the negligence of copyists.

The printed text of 1597 presents the aspect of a version modernized by some person unknown, about the middle of the sixteenth century, to suit the changes which had then taken place in the language. In the "Northren Mother's Blessing," the metre and arrangement of the stanzas, as well as the diction, vary importantly; and the first stanza in the edition published by J. S. [Joshua Sylvester?] is peculiar to that copy. On the whole, however, the text printed by Sir F. Madden is greatly superior, and it has been adopted as the basis of the present edition, a few readings only being taken from the copy of 1597.

The opening stanza of the *Northren Mother's Blessing* states that the "Goode Wif," who acts the part of counsellor to her child, was "of the North countrè," although a Norfolk gentleman was the owner of the MS. (according to J. S.) in 1597; and this view as to the locality of the poem is borne out by the frequency of northern provincialisms.

The assertion that the poem was "written nine years before the death of G. Chaucer (*i. e.* in 1391)," is, of course, of little value in determining its antiquity; but, after all, Chaucer died only in 1400, while Henry VI. began to reign in 1422, and perhaps J. S., whoever he was, had authority for assigning, with such minute attention to chronology, this particular piece to the Chaucerian era. That J. S., however, is not a very safe guide is very evident from the fact that he claims the credit of presenting to the public, for the first time, William Walter's "*Statelie Tragedie of Guistard and Sismond*," printed half a century before by Wyukyn de Worde.

¶ The Goode Wif thought hir Doughter fele tyme and ofte gode woman for to be.



OD wold that euery wife, that wonnyth in  
this land,  
Wold teach her doughter, as ye shal vnder-  
stand;

As a good wife did of the North countrè,  
How her doughter should lere a good wife to bee:  
For lack of the moders teaching makes the doughter of  
euill liuing, my leue dere child.<sup>1</sup>]

Doughter, 3if thou wilt ben a wif, and wiseliche werche,<sup>2</sup>  
Loke that thou loue welle God and holy cherche;  
Go to cherche when thou mygthe; lette for no reyne;  
Alle the day thou farest the bette that thou hast God  
yseyne:

Wele thryuethe that God loueth, my dere childe. 10

Blethely 3eue thi tythys and thin offerynges bothe;  
The pore men at thi dore, be thou hem nogthe lothe,  
3eue hem blethely of thi good, and be thou nogthe to  
harde;

<sup>1</sup> This stanza is peeuiliar to the edition of 1597. There the last line is divided into three; but I have thrown it into one, to harmonize with the remainder of the poem.

<sup>2</sup> The editor of 1597 printed *werke*, and in the next line substituted *kirke* for *cherche*. This seems to shew that the MS. from which the edition of 1597 was taken was altered by some one *not* of the "North countrè," perhaps by the "Northfolke gentleman," who having, it may be conjectured, changed *werche* into *werke*, thought it necessary to supply a rhyme to the latter form.

Seldam is the house pore there God is stywarde ;  
Tresour he hathe that pouere fedithe, my leue childe.

The while thou sittest in chirche, thi bedys schalt thou  
bidde ;<sup>1</sup>

Make thou none iangelynge withe fremed<sup>2</sup> ne withe  
sibbe ;

Laughe none to skorne,<sup>3</sup> nethir olde ne ȝonge ;

Be of a good berynge and of a good tonge :

In thi gode berynge begynnythe thy worschipe, my  
dere childe. 20

ȝif any man bidde the worschipe, and wille wedde the,  
Auyselfe answer hym ; scorne hym noghte, what he be ;  
Schewe it to thin frendis, and for-hele it noght ;  
Sitte bi hym ne stande, ther synne may be wrought :  
A slaundrer that is reised is euelle to felle, my leue  
childe.

What man the wedde schalle be for God withe a rynge,  
Honoure hym and wurchipe hym, and bowe ouere alle  
thinge ;

<sup>1</sup> i. e. bead. So in *The Kyng and the Hermyt*, line 111 :—

“ That herd an hermyte there within,  
Unto the gate he gan to wyn,  
Bedyng his preyer.”

<sup>2</sup> The editor of 1597, or the modernizer of the poem as it was printed by him, did not understand the meaning of *fremed* (stranger), and changed the expression to *friend*.

<sup>3</sup> MS. has *shorne*.

Mekely hym answe're, and noght to haterlynge,<sup>1</sup>  
 And so thou schalt slake his mode, and be his derlynge  
 Fayre wordes wratthe slakithe, my dere childe. 30

Swete of speche schalt thou be, glad of mylde moode,  
 Trewe in worde and in dede, in lyue and soule goode ;  
 Kepe the fro synne, fro vylenye and schame,  
 And loke that thou bere the so wele, that men seie the  
     no blame :  
 A gode name fore wynnethe, my leue childe.

Be thou of semblauntz sad and euer of faire chere,  
 That thi chere chaunge noght for noght that thou  
     maiste here ;  
 Fare noght as a gygge for noght that may be tyde ;  
 Laughe thou noght to lowde, ne ȝane<sup>2</sup> thou noght to  
     wyde :  
 Lawchen thou maight and faire mought make my dere  
     childe. 40

When thou goest be the weie, goe thou noght to faste ;  
 Wagge noght withe thin hedde, ne thin schuldres cast.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Halliwell could not find any other example of the use of this expression. In the edition of 1597 it is altered to *snatching*.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* yawn. Mr. Halliwell (*Archaic Dictionary*, art. ȜANE,) says that it is still in use in Lincolnshire, where it is pronounced ȝawn. Palsgrave notices this form of the word in his *L'Esclaircissement de la Langue Françoisse*, 1530. The edition of 1597 has *gape*.

<sup>3</sup> MS., which is followed by the editor of 1838, reads, "thin schuldres away to cast." The edition of 1597 has "ne thy



Be noght of many wordes ; swere thou noght to grete ;  
 Alle suehe maners, my dere childe, thou muste lete :  
 Euer<sup>1</sup> lak euell name, my leue childe.

Go thou noght to toun, as it were a gase,<sup>2</sup>  
 Fro house to house for to seke the mase ;<sup>3</sup>  
 Goe thou noght to market thi borelle<sup>4</sup> for to selle ;  
 Ne goe thou noght to tauerne thi wurchipe to felle :<sup>5</sup>  
 That tauerne hauntethe his thrifte for-sakithe, my dere  
 childe. 50

ȝif thou be in any stede ther good-drynke is a lofte,  
 Whethir thou serue or sitte softe,  
 Mesurely take ther offe, that the falle no blame ;  
 ȝif thou be ofte dronken, it fallithe the to grete schame :  
 That mesure louethe and skille, ofte hathe his wille,  
 my leue childe.

shoulders cast." The latter seems the preferable reading ; but in adopting it I have adhered to the letter of the MS. as far as possible.

<sup>1</sup> MS. and edition of 1838 have *euell*. The scribe was perhaps betrayed into an error by the similarity between *euell* and the next word but one in the same line.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* goose.

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* to pursue, or run after, the idle fancy. See *The Kyng and the Hermyt*, line 417. The word *mase* seems to have been equally misunderstood by the editors of 1597 and 1838 ; the former renders it *maze*, the latter queries *place of public resort*.

<sup>4</sup> A kind of cloth. The editor of 1597 has for "borelle for to selle," *barrel to fill*, which seems to indicate that the writer of that copy missed the point.

<sup>5</sup> *i. e.* to destroy.

Goe thou noght to wrastelynge ne schetynge at the  
cokke,<sup>1</sup>

As it were a strumpet or a gegelotte ;

Wone at home, doughter, and kepe thin owen wike ;<sup>2</sup>

And so thou sehalt, my leue childe, sone waxe riche :

Mery [it] is owne thinge to kepe, my dere childe. 60

Awheynte the noght withe ilke man that thou metest  
in the strete,

And thei he speke foule to the, faire thou him grete ;

[And] thou [goe] forthe<sup>3</sup> in the weie, longe by none  
thou stande ;

[That]<sup>4</sup> thou thorow no vyleyny thin hert no thinges  
chaunge :

For alle ben nought trewe that faire spekyn, my leue  
childe.

<sup>1</sup> Shooting at an artificial cock or parrot was a favorite game in the time of Elizabeth. See Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, ed. 1845, p. 55, and Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, ed. 1849, i. 81-2. From the last work we may collect that any aim became known, at a later period, as a *cock*. *Cock-throwing* on Shrove Tuesday has been a very popular diversion in this country and in France (whence perhaps we received it) from the earliest times down to a comparatively recent date. Not only cocks, but *hens* and *doves* were victims to this barbarous usage.

<sup>2</sup> Home.

<sup>3</sup> Something is wanting in the MS. to complete the sense and the rhythm. The edition of 1597 has :—

“Let hem not by the wey, nor by hem doe not stond,  
That they with velony make not thine hert bond.”

The meaning of which is opposed to the context, if, indeed, the passage as it there stands has any meaning at all.

<sup>4</sup> Here again there is an *hiatus* in the MS.

For none wronge couetise ȝifte thou ne take ;  
 But thou wete wele whi, sone thou it forsake ;  
 Goode wise men withe ȝiftis [wim] men<sup>1</sup> may ouergone,  
 Thow thei were also trewe as euer was the stone :  
 Bounden he is that ȝifte takithe, my dere childe. 70

In othir mannys house make thou none maistrye,  
 Ne blame thou no thinge that thou seiste withe thi eye ;  
 I pray the, my dere childe, loke thou bere the so wele,  
 That alle men may seyen thou art so trewe as stele :  
 Gode name is golde worthe, my leuc childe.

Be thou no chider, ne of wordis bolde,  
 To mysseyn thi neyboure neither ȝonge ne olde ;  
 Be thou noght to mody ne to envyouse,  
 For noght that may be tyde in othir mannys house :  
 Envyouse herte hym selfe fretithe, my dere childe. 80

And ȝif thi neyboures wif<sup>2</sup> haue riche atyire,  
 Ther for make thou no stryue, ne bren thou noght as  
     fyire ;  
 But thanke God of that good that he hathe the  
     ȝeuen,

<sup>1</sup> The MS. is here clearly at fault, as the sense imperatively requires *women*. The edition of 1597 has, "Men with their gifts *wemen* oregone."

<sup>2</sup> The edition of 1597 reads:—

"Giff thy neighbors haue rich instore or tyre,"

By which alteration the force of the passage is, at all events, much weakened.

And so thou schalt, my good child, in grete ese leuen :  
At ese he is that seldam thankithe,<sup>1</sup> my leue childe.

Housewifly schalt thou goen on the werke day ;  
Pride and reste, and ydelchipe,<sup>2</sup> do it alle away ;  
And when the haliday is come, wise schalt thou be  
The haliday to wurchipe, and God schalle loue the :  
[Be] more for worschipe than for pride, my dere childe. 90

[Go not] withe ryche robys<sup>3</sup> and garlondys and swiche  
thinge,

Ne countirfete no ladijs, as thi lorde were a kynge ;  
Withe swiche as he may the fynde, payede<sup>4</sup> schalt thou be,  
That he lees noght his manhed for the loue of the :  
Ouere done pride makythe nakid syde, my leue childe.

Mekille schame ben wymmen worthi, and so hem  
schalle be tide,  
That bryngyn her lordis in mischef for here mekille  
pride.

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* thinketh. The edition of 1597 has :—

“ For oft at ease he is,  
That loues peace I wis,  
My leue dere child.”

<sup>2</sup> In the edition of 1597 we find this word altered to *idlenes*, which is a less forcible and idiomatic mode of expression.

<sup>3</sup> This and the next four lines do not occur in the edition of 1597, which begins at this point, moreover, to exhibit many departures in regard to the sequence of the narrative. I have followed the MS. in this respect throughout.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* satisfied. See Halliwell's *Archaic Dictionary*, art. *Pay*, and *The Kyng and the Hermyt*, *suprà*, p. 29, line 433.

Be wele wise, doughtere, and kepe thin owen gode ;  
For aftir<sup>1</sup> the wrenne hathe veynes, men schalle late  
hir blode :

His thrifte waxithe thynne, that spendithe more than  
[he doth] wyne, my dere childe. 100

Housewifly loke thin house and alle thin meynè ;  
To bitter ne to boner withe hem ne schalt thou be ;  
Loke what note<sup>2</sup> is moste nede for to done,  
And sette hem ther to, bothe rathe and sone :  
Redy is at nede aforne done dede, my leue childe.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The edition of 1597 reads :—

“ After the wren has vaines men may let blood.”

That is to say, at that season of the year when the young bird is of a certain growth, men shall, if they require it, undergo cupping. In the MS. and in the edition of 1838, on the contrary, the line runs thus :—

“ For aftir the wrenne hathe veynes, men schalle late HIR blode,”

Sir Frederick Madden could make nothing of this passage, and in his Preface he expressly says that “the researches made for this purpose [the illustration of it] have not proved successful.” It appears to me that the sense is figurative, and that what the author intended to convey was, that as soon as a person becomes full of substance, the world will fleece him or her, if he or she does not exercise vigilance. This construction is borne out completely by the context.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* business.

<sup>3</sup> MS. has *nedy is at nede*, &c. In the edition of 1597 the corresponding passage runs thus :—

“ Before doue deede  
Another may speede,  
My leue [dere child.]”

And ȝif thin lorde be fro home, lete hem noght goen  
ydelle ;

Loke that thou wete wele [w]ho do mekylle or lytelle ;  
He that hathe wele done ȝelde hym wele his whyle,  
He dothe an other tyme the bette, but he be a vyle :<sup>1</sup>  
A dede wele done herte it whemyth,<sup>2</sup> my dere childe. 110

And ȝif thi nede be grette, and thi tyme streite,  
Goe thi selfe there to, and make an housewifis breyde ;  
Alle thei schalle do the better that thou bi hem standes ;  
The werke is the soner done that hathe many handes :  
Many handys make light werke, my leue childe.

Loke wele what thi meny dothe, abowte hem thou  
wende,

Wilke dede that schalle be done be at the tone ende ;  
ȝif thou fynde defaugthe, sone do thou it amende,  
[Lest] thei haue swiche for hem that may hem defende ;  
Mykelle note hym be-houethe to don that house schall  
holden, [my leue childe.] 120

Loke that allething be wele, when thei her werke letyne ;  
Take the keyȝes to the warde, that thei be nought for-  
getyne ;

Loke that thinge be wele, lette for none feyntyse ;  
Doughter, ȝif thou doest so than doest thou as the wise :  
Leue<sup>3</sup> none better than thi selfe, my leue childe.

<sup>1</sup> i. e. unless he is a good-for-nothing fellow.

<sup>2</sup> Pleaseth.

<sup>3</sup> i. e. trust, believe. So, in the *Lyfe of Seynt Kateryn* (Halliwell's *Contributions to Early English Literature*, 1849, p. 8):—

“Tho sayde Maxent to Kateryn :  
Leve thy God, and leve on myn.”

There, as here, we have the word in two senses in the same line.

Sitte thou nought to longe on nygthis by the cuppe,  
And sey wasseile and drynkeheil :<sup>1</sup> [for then] oure sires  
thrift is vppe ;

Go to thi bedde be tyme ; on morowe reys vppe be  
lyue,

And so thou schalt, my dere childe, hasteliche thryue :  
Alle his ese may he nought haue that thryue schalle,  
my dere childe. 130

ȝif it so betyde thin frendes fro the falle,  
And God sendde the childryn that aftir brede wille calle,  
And thou haste mekyll nede, and counseyll haste thou  
none,

Thou must then care and spare hard as the stone :<sup>2</sup>  
Thynge that may be tyde is for to dowre,<sup>3</sup> my leue childe.

Doughter, I the praye that thou the so be thengke  
What men the honouren, and sette the on the bengke  
Of aventurys that may be tyde, bothe ȝonge and olde,  
That now ben fulle pouere, that sum tyme were fulle  
bolde :

Many for folye hem self for-doothe, my dere childe. 140

<sup>1</sup> These two festive phrases are probably too well understood to require explanation. An ample account of the subject may be found in Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, ed. 1849, i. 2-30.

<sup>2</sup> So edition of 1597. The line in the MS., and in the edition of 1838, runs as follows :—

“But as bare as thou come, from the harde ston.”

<sup>3</sup> dowre, *i. e.* endure. We now say, “What can't be cured must be endured.”

Take ensauple by hem, and lette alle folie,  
 That thou haue none defawte, ne they, or ȝe dye,<sup>1</sup>  
 ȝif God the sende children, thou hast the more to done,  
 Thei askyn grete dispens ; here warisone thei wille haue  
                   sone :

Care he hathe that ehildryn schalle kepe, my leue ehilde.

And ȝif thou be a ryehe wiffe, be thou nought to harde,  
 Welkome fayre thin neyboures that eomen to the  
                   towarde ;

Mete and drynke withe faire semblaunte, the more  
                   schalle be thi mede ;

Ilke a man after his state, and ȝeue the pouere atte  
                   nede :

For happe that may be tide, loue thi neybourghe the  
                   be side, my leue ehilde. 150

Loke to thin doughters so wele, that thei bethe nought  
                   for lorne,

Fro that tyme that thei ben of thin body borne ;

Gader thou muste faste to here mariage,

And ȝeue hem sone to man, when thei ben of age :

Maydenys ben loneliche and no thing sekir,<sup>2</sup> my leue  
                   ehilde.

<sup>1</sup> MS. has *dyen*.

<sup>2</sup> *Sekir*, or *sicker*, is a very common form of *secure*, and so *sickerly* for *securely*, and *unsickerly* for *insecurely*. In the prose *Morte Arthure* (ed. Wright, iii. 61), it is used almost in the modern colloquial sense:—" 'A!' said Sir Launcelot, 'comfort your selfe, for it shall bee unto us as a great honour, and much more then if we died in any other places: for of death wee be *sicker*.' "



And ȝif thou loue thin ehildryn, loke thou holde hem  
lowe ;

ȝif any of hem do amys, curse hem nought ne blowe,  
But take a smerte rodde, and bete hem alle by rowe,<sup>1</sup>  
Tylle thei eryl merey, and be here gylte aknowe :  
Leue ehilde lore behoueth, my dere ehilde. 160

Borow nought blethely, ne take nought frest,<sup>2</sup>  
But the more nede it make, or the more brest ;  
Make the nought to riche of other mannys thinge ;  
The bolder to spende the worse thriuing :<sup>3</sup>  
Borowed thinge wole home, my leue ehilde.

ȝeue thy meyne here hire at here terme day,  
Whether they leue stille, or thei wende away ;  
Be thou wise wif<sup>4</sup> of thin owen, that thou hast in wolde,<sup>5</sup>  
That thi friendes haue joye of the, bothe yonge and olde :  
Thi thrifte is thi frendis myrthe, my dere ehilde.<sup>6</sup> 170

Now haue I taught the, doughter, so dide my modir me ;  
Thenk ther on bothe nyght and day, forȝete nought  
thise thre,

<sup>1</sup> This is an admirable little picture of the interior of a model nursery of Henry V. or VI.'s time.

<sup>2</sup> Trust.

<sup>3</sup> So edition of 1597. The MS. used by Sir Frederick Madden reads "the worthe of a ferthinge," which is certainly rather obscure.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* economist. *Husband* and *Huswife* are constantly used in this sense.

<sup>5</sup> World.

<sup>6</sup> This is equivalent to the modern adage, "Help yourself, and your friends will bless you."

Haue mesure, lowenesse and forthought, that I haue  
the taught,  
What man that the wedde schalle, than is he nought  
bycaught :  
Better were a childe unborne than vntaught, my leue  
childe.

Now thrifte and thedam<sup>1</sup> mote thou haue, my leue  
swete barn,  
Of alle oure forme fadres that euer ware or arn,  
Of patriarkes, of prophetis, that euer were o lyue,<sup>2</sup>  
Here blessinge mote thu haue, and wele mote thou  
thryue :  
Wele is the childe that thryue may, my dere childe. 180

Explicit expliciat

Iudere scriptor eat.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prosperity, from *the*, V. to thrive. It may be remarked that I have followed the edition of 1838 in transposing this and the following stanza, which in the MS. are improperly arranged.

<sup>2</sup> Alive. In the metrical *Morte Arthure*, ed. Halliwell, we find *on lyve*, *alyve*, and *one lyve*, all being varied forms of *on lyve* or *on life*. In the *Chester Plays*, *one sleepe* is used for *asleep*.

<sup>3</sup> In the edition of 1597, the poem concludes with a stanza not found in the MS. printed in 1838. This stanza is as follows:—

“Now look thou do, doughter, as I haue taught thee,  
And thou shalt haue my blessing, the better may thou the;  
And euery maiden, that good wife wold bee,  
Do as I haue taught you, for saint charity.  
And all that so will do, God giue hem his blessing,  
And send hem all heauen at her last ending!

Amen.

EXPLICIT.”



## How a Merchande dyd hys Wyfe Betray.

THIS piece, which is the original of the common chap-book, "A Choice Pennyworth of Wit," is here given from a collation of three different texts, viz. MS. More, 690, in the Public Library at Cambridge, now known as Ff. ii. 38; Harl. MS. 5396, and the Auchinleck MS. The Harleian copy is the best, but unfortunately nearly half the production is missing. Ritson printed the poem from the Cambridge MS. in his *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*, 1791; he mentions the Harleian version, but did not make use of it; which is to be regretted, as it would have occasionally supplied better and more genuine readings. The copy extant in the Auchinleck MS. has been edited for the Abbotsford Club by David Laing Esq.; but the text bears strong marks of inferior antiquity,<sup>1</sup> and I have availed myself of it very sparingly.

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<sup>1</sup> This version is much more diffuse than either the Cambridge or Harleian copies. It is also in rhyming couplets; there is no division into *fits*. From the language, which differs very importantly from the text here used, it is to be judged that the copyist was an illiterate person, who had no competent knowledge of composition or rhythm, and that the transcript was made at a later period than the Cambridge one, which is certainly far more ancient, and incomparably more authentic. Some of the archaisms, indeed, are a little in the style of the "Rowley renaissance," and I am half inclined to suspect that a portion, at least, of the Auchinleck copy was a forgery of the seventeenth century.

No early-printed edition is at present known; but the book was in the library of Captain Cox in 1575,<sup>1</sup> and from Laneham's description it is to be gathered that the title given to it at that time was, *The Chapman of a Peneworth of Wit*. Many years later, it was reproduced with a different title, as follows—"Penny-wise, pound-foolish; or a Bristow diamond, set in two rings, and both crack'd. Profitable for married men, pleasant for young men, and a rare example for all good women." London, 1631. 4<sup>to</sup>. b. l. With a woodcut.

There is an edition of the *Pennyworth of Wit* in its enlarged shape, with the following title—"A Choice Pennyworth of Wit; or a clear distinction between a virtuous wife and a wanton Harlot, in three parts. London. Printed for S. Wates, 1707. 12<sup>o</sup>." Some of the chapmen's editions are called, "A Pennyworth of Wit; or, the Deluded merchant."

According to the compiler of the modernized penny-history, the book was "set forth by Mr. William Lane," but what ground or pretence he might have for this assignation of authorship, it is not at all easy to decide. A copy of the chapman's edition, in the possession of the editor formerly belonged to Joseph Haslewood, Esq., and is bound up with thirty-nine similar pieces, mostly printed at Tewkesbury, about 1770 or 1780. It consists of four leaves, and is divided into three parts. The story begins in the following manner:—

"Here is a Pennyworth of Wit,  
For those that ever went astray,  
If warning they will take by it,  
'Twill do them good another day."

The copy of the present tale, already described as being in Harl. MS., is seemingly of about the same age as that found among Bishop More's MSS. at Cambridge. It is to be regretted that so large a portion of it has been lost.

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<sup>1</sup> The Registers of the Stationers' Company shew that this piece was known at a very early date under the title of "A Pennyworth of Wit," and that it was in print quite in the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth. In 1560-1, John Sampson, alias Awdeley, paid xii<sup>d</sup> for the right to publish that and other pamphlets. See Collier's *Extracts*, i. 29.

Ritson says that this legend "has been evidently designed to be sung to the harp."

The true origin of "A Pennyworth of Wit," is no doubt correctly assigned by Mr. Laing, in his Introduction to the Abbotsford Club edition,<sup>1</sup> to the fabliau of "La Bourse pleine de sens" [printed in the third volume of Barbazan's Collection of *Fabliaux et Contes*, ed. 1808.] "There is," observes Ritson, "a striking coincidence of idea in Mr. Gilbert Cooper's beautiful elegy intitled 'A father's advice to his son,' as well as in the old song of 'It's good to be merry and wise;' which the more curious reader may consult at his leisure."

The chap-book of *A Pennyworth of Wit* suggested to some enterprising printer, at a later date, a still more attractive title, and consequently the public appetite for cheap novelties was gratified by the offer of *Nine Pennyworth for a Penny*.<sup>2</sup> But the amplification of the title-page did not necessarily involve that of the contents.

In the ballad of "Constance of Cleveland," there is an account of a man being seduced from his wife's love by a wanton woman; but the incidents are different, and the plot is more tragical.

<sup>1</sup> A Penni-worth of Witte, Florice and Blancheffour, and other Pieces of Antient English Poetry. Edited by D. Laing. Edin., 1857, 4°.

<sup>2</sup> This sort of title was, no doubt, accounted very taking. There is a very rare chap-book called, "Wit's Academy, or *Six Penyworth for a Peny*, being Ben Johnson's last Arrow to all Citizen's Wives and London Dames, shot from his famous poetical Quiver, to the general view of the courteous Reader, laid open by way of Question and Answer, and interlarded with sundry choice Conceits upon the Times, very pleasant and delightful." Imprinted at London by R. Wood, 1656. 4°.

Here foloweth how a Merchande dyd hys Wyfe Betray.



YSTENYTH, lordynges, y yow pray,<sup>1</sup>  
How a merchand dyd hys wyfe betray,  
Bothe be day and be nyghte,  
If ye wylle herkyn aryghte.

Thys songe ys of a merchand of thys cuntré,  
That had a wyfe was<sup>2</sup> feyre and free;  
The marchand had a fulle gode wyfe,  
Sche louyd hym trewly as hur lyfe;<sup>3</sup>  
What that euyr he to hur sayde,  
Euyr sche helde hur wele apayde.  
The marchand, that was so stout and<sup>4</sup> gay,  
By another woman he lay;<sup>5</sup>

10

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<sup>1</sup> The Auchinleck MS. commences thus imperfectly:—

“Of a chaunce I chil ȝou telle,  
That whilom in this lond bi felle  
Ones. It was a marchande riche—”  
    &c. &c.

It is proper to remark, that in the original there are no points or pauses. The commencement of the Harl. MS. 5396, is as follows:—

“Lystynet, lordyngs, I yow praye,  
How many man can hys wyfe be traye,  
Bothe be day and be nyȝt”—&c.

<sup>2</sup> So Harl. MS.

<sup>3</sup> “Bletheliche sche dede al that he sede,  
And alle her loue on him sche leyde.”

*Auchinleck MS.*

<sup>4</sup> So Harl. MS.

<sup>5</sup> “The godeman was stoute and gay,  
And bi another wenche he lay.”

*Auchinleck MS.*

He boghte hur gownys of grete pryce,  
 Furryd with menyvere and with gryse,  
 Tyll<sup>1</sup> hur hedd ryalle atyre,  
 As any lady myghte desyre.  
 Hys wyfe, that was so trewe as ston,  
 He wolde ware no thyng vpon.  
 That was foly, be my fay,  
 That fayrenes schulde tru loue betray. 20  
 So hyt happenyd, as he wolde,  
 The marchand ouer the see he schulde.  
 Tyll<sup>2</sup> hys leman ys he gon,  
 Leue at hur then has he ton;<sup>3</sup>  
 With clypppyng and with kyssyng swete,  
 When they schulde parte, bothe dyd they wepe.  
 Tylle hys wyfe ys he gon,  
 Leue at hur then hath he ton :  
 Dame, he seyde, be Goddys are,<sup>4</sup>  
 Haste thou any sylvyr<sup>5</sup> thou woldyst ware? 30  
 Whan y come bezonde the see,  
 That y myzt the bye some ryche drewrè.<sup>6</sup>  
 Syr, sche seyde, as Cryst me saue,<sup>7</sup>  
 Ye haue alle that euyr y haue ;

<sup>1</sup> So Harl. MS.<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* Heir.<sup>5</sup> Harl. MS.

<sup>6</sup> The Auchinleck MS. presents several variations here, mostly for the worse. The corresponding lines to 29-32 in the present text run as follow :—

“ Dame hast ow the bi-thought,  
 What juwels thou wilt have bought?  
 ȝf thou wilt have any for me,  
 Thou most me reche gode monè.”

<sup>7</sup> Bi sein Jan.—*Auch. copy.*

Ye schalle haue a peny here,  
 As thou art my trewe weddyd<sup>1</sup> fere :  
 Bye ye me a penyworth<sup>2</sup> of wytt,  
 And in youre hert kepe wele hyt.  
 Styлле stode the merchand tho,<sup>3</sup>  
 Lothe he was the peny to forgoo, 40  
 Certen sothe, as y yow say,  
 He heft<sup>4</sup> hyt in hys purs, and zede hys way.  
 A fulle gode wynde god hath hym sende,  
 Ynto<sup>5</sup> Fraunce hyt can hym brynge.  
 A fulle gode schypp arrayed he  
 Wyth marchaundyce and spyeerè.  
 Certen sothe, or he wolde reste,  
 He boghte hys lemman of the beste,  
 He boghte hur bedys, brochys and ryngs,  
 Nowehys<sup>6</sup> of golde, and many feyre thyngs ; 50  
 He boghte hur perry<sup>7</sup> to hur hedd  
 Of saphers and of rubeys red.

<sup>1</sup> Harl. MS.

<sup>2</sup> This expression is here rather unusually put in its strict sense, for it oftener than otherwise occurs in early writers with the meaning of *a bargain*. "Robin Hood's pennyworths" was a phrase intimating a sale of goods below their real value. In Armin's *Nest of Ninnies*, 1608 (S. S. ed. p. 30), there is the following passage:—"The gentleman with whom this Leonard dwelt, having bought a goodlye fayre hawke, brought her home, being not a little proud of his pennyworth." And a little farther on in the same tract (p. 32), we have—"The currish crittick said shee [the world] should, and gaue her the third pennerth of the morral." In *Love's Labour's Lost*, iii. 1, Shakespeare uses the expression, "a halfpenny purse of wit."

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* then.

<sup>4</sup> Harl. MS.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Bracelets, or necklaces.

<sup>7</sup> Precious stones.



Hys wyfe, that was so trew as ston,  
 He wolde ware nothyng vpon.  
 That was foly, be my fay,  
 That fayrenes schulde trew luf betray.  
 When he had boghte alle that he wolde,  
 The marchand oury the see he schulde.  
 The marchandys man to hys mast dyd speke :  
 Oure damys peny let vs not forgete. 69  
 The marchand swore, be seynt Anne :  
 ȝyt ys a lewde bargan,  
 To bye owre dame a penyworth of wytt ;  
 In alle Fraunce y can not fynde hyt.  
 An<sup>1</sup> olde man in the halle stode,<sup>2</sup>  
 The marchandys speche he undurȝode ;  
 The olde man to the marchand can<sup>3</sup> say :  
 A worde of counselle, y yow pray,  
 And y schall selle yow a penyworth of wyt,  
 Yf ye wyl take hede to hyt ; 70  
 Telle me, marchand, be thy lyfe,  
 Whethyr haste thou a leman or a wyfe ?  
 Syr, y haue bothe, as haue y reste ;  
 But my paramour loue I beste.  
 Then seyde the olde man withowten were :  
 Do now, as y teche the here ;

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<sup>1</sup> The MSS. have *And*. This was Ritson's emendation.

<sup>2</sup> "An Eld man ther in sat  
 His wordes wele underȝat,  
 And in his hert he thought anon,  
 That sum thing ther was misgon."

*Auchinleck MS.*

I am much deceived, if this does not read like a clumsy imitation of the original.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. gan, or began.

When thou comyst ouyr the salte fome,  
 Olde clothys then do the vpon,  
 To thy lemman that thou goo,<sup>1</sup>  
 And telle hur of alle thy woo ;  
 Syke sore, do as y the say,  
 Say alle thy gode ys loste away,  
 Thy schyp ys drownyd in the fom,<sup>2</sup>  
 And alle thy god ys loste the from.<sup>3</sup>  
 Whan thou haste tolde hur soo,  
 Then to thy weddyd wyfe thou go ;  
 Whedyr<sup>4</sup> helpyth the bettur yn thy nede,  
 Dwelle with hur, as Cryste the spede.<sup>5</sup>  
 The marchand seyde: wele must thou fare,  
 Have here thy peny, y haue my ware.

80

90

<sup>1</sup> In the Harl. and More MSS. these lines are improperly arranged, line 79 following line 84. This was partly pointed out by Ritson. In the Auchinleck copy the mistake does not occur. The latter reads :—

“ A pouer wede do the opon,  
 Al so thou haddest other non,  
 And wende to thi lemannes inne.”

<sup>2</sup> Foam.

<sup>3</sup> In the Auchinleck copy are the following lines, which do not occur in the Harl. MS. :—

“ And say thou hast a man y-slawe,  
 Thou no dorst abide londes lawe,  
 And aske thi leman ȝyf seche might  
 Herberur the this ich night.  
 And elles thou most fle out of lond,  
 And right thus thou schalt hir fond.”

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* which of the two.

<sup>5</sup> In the Auchinleck copy several lines follow which are not in the Harl. MS. ; but they are mere unimportant amplifications.

When he come ouer the salte fome,  
 Olde clothys he dyd hym vpon,  
 Hys lemman lokyd forthe, and on hym see,  
 And seyde to hur maydyn : how lykyth the ?  
 My love ys comyn fro beyonde the see ;  
 Come hedur, and see hym wyth thyn eye.  
 The maydyn seyde : be my fay,  
 He ys yn a febulle<sup>1</sup> array.  
 Wend ye down, maydyn, in to the halle ;  
 Yf thou mete the marehand withalle, 100  
 And yf he spyrrre after me,  
 Say, thou sawe me wyth non eye ;  
 Yf he wylle alगतys<sup>2</sup> wytt,<sup>3</sup>  
 Say in my chaumbyr y lye sore syke,  
 Out of hyt y may not wyne,  
 To speke wyth none ende of my kynne,  
 Nother wyth hym nor with none other,  
 All[th]of he were myn own brodyr.  
 Allas ! seyde the maydyn, why sey ye soo ?  
 Thynke how he helpyd yow owt of moche wo. 110  
 Fyrste when ye mett, wyth owt lesynge,  
 Youre gode was not worthe xx s.,  
 Now hyt ys worthe xx<sup>4</sup> pownde  
 Of golde and syluyr that ys rounde.  
 Gode ys but a lante<sup>5</sup> lone :  
 Sum tyme men haue hyt, and sum tyme non ;  
 Thof alle hys gode be gon hym froo,  
 Neuyr forsake hym in hys woo.

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* wretched, poor.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding.<sup>3</sup> Know, *i. e.* if he will continue to desire information.<sup>4</sup> So Harl. MS.<sup>5</sup> *i. e.* lent.

Wynd ye down, mayden, as y byd thee,  
 Thou sehalt no lenger ellys dwelle with me. 120  
 The maydyn wente in to the halle,  
 There sehe mett the marehand withalle.  
 Wher ys my leman? wher ys sehe?  
 Why wylle sehe not eom speke with me?  
 Syr, y do the wele to wytt,  
 Yn hyr ehaumbyr sehe lygt sore seke,  
 Out of hyt sehe may not wynne,  
 To speke wyth non ende of hur kynne,  
 Nother with yow nor with non other,  
 Thogh ye were hur own brother. 130  
 Maydyn, to my lemman that thou go,  
 And telle hur my gode ys loste me fro,  
 My schyp ys drownyd in the fom,  
 Alle my gode ys loste me from;  
 A gentylman have y slawe,<sup>1</sup>  
 Y may not abyde the londys lawe;  
 Pray hur, as sehe luvys me dere,  
 As y have ben to her a trewe fere,  
 To kepe me preuy in hur ehaumbyr,  
 That the kyngys baylys take me neuyr. 140  
 Into the chaumbyr the maydyn ys gon,  
 Thys tale sehe tolde hur dame auone.  
 In to the halle, maydyn, wend thou downe,  
 And bydd hym owt of my halle to gon,

---

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* slain. In the English *Gesta Romanorum*, ed. Madden, No. 33, there is a story, which corresponds to a certain extent with this portion of the present narrative; but the passage is too long for transcription, and I must content myself with referring the reader.

Or y schalle wende in to the toune,<sup>1</sup>  
 And make the kyngys baylys to come :  
 Y swere, be God of grete renown,  
 Y wyllc neuyr harbur the kyngys felone.  
 The maydyn wente in to the halle,  
 And thus sche tolde the merchand alle ; 150  
 The marchand saw none other spede ;  
 He toke hys leve, and forthe he ȝede.  
 Lystenyth, lordyngys, curteys and hende,<sup>2</sup>  
 For ȝyt ys the better fytt behynde.

## [The Second Fit.]



YSTENYTH, lordyngys, great and smale :<sup>3</sup>

The marchand ys now to hys own halle ;  
 Of hys comyng hys wyfe was fayne,  
 Anone sche come hym agayne.

Husbonde, sche scyde, welcome ye be,  
 How haue ye fardc beyonde the see ? 160  
 Dame, he scyde, be Goddys arc,  
 Alle fulle febylle hath be my fare ;  
 Alle the gode that euer was thyn and myn,  
 Hyt ys loste, be seynt Martyn.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Say I me self schal, bot he fle,  
 Swithe gon in to the citè,  
 And do the kinges bailifes come,  
 And hastiliche he schal be nome,  
 And in a strong prisoun be cast,  
 And be an honged atte last."

*Auchinleck MS.*

<sup>2</sup> Polite.

<sup>3</sup> Not in Auchinleck copy.

In a storme y was be-stadde,<sup>1</sup>  
 Was y neuyr halfe so sore adrad,  
 Y thanke [for] hyt God, for so y may,  
 That euyr y skapyd on lyve<sup>2</sup> away ;  
 My schypp ys drownyd in the fom,  
 And alle my gode ys loste me from ;  
 A gentylman haue y slawe,  
 I may not abyde the londys lawe ;<sup>3</sup>  
 I pray the, as thou louest me dere,  
 As thou art my trewe weddyd fere,  
 In thy chaumber thou woldest kepc me dern.<sup>4</sup>  
 Syr, sche seyde, no man schalle me warne :<sup>5</sup>  
 Be styлле, husbonde, sygh not so sore,  
 He that hathe thy gode may sende the more ;  
 Thowe alle thy gode be fro the goo,  
 I wylle neuyr forsake the in thy woo ;  
 Y schalle go to the kyng and to the quene,  
 And knele before them on my kneen :  
 There to knele and neuyr to cese,  
 Tyl of the kyng y haue getyn thy pees.  
 I can bake, brewe, carde and spynne,  
 My maydenys and y can sylvyr wyne,  
 Euyr whylle y am thy wyfe,  
 To maynten the a trewe mannys lyfe.

170

189

<sup>1</sup> Placed, situated.<sup>2</sup> The old form of *alive*.<sup>3</sup> The Harl. MS. ends here imperfectly, the remainder having been lost.<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* secret. In the *Tua Maryit Wemen and the Wedo*, Dunbar says:—

“ I drew in derne to the dyk to dirkin eftir myrthis.”

<sup>5</sup> *i. e.* *werne*.

Certen sothe, as y yow say,  
 Alle nyghte be hys wyfe he lay, 190  
 On the morne, or he forthe yede,  
 He kaste on hym a ryalle wede,  
 And bestrode a fulle gode stede,  
 And to hys lemmans hows he yede.  
 Hys lemman lokyd forthe, and on hym see,  
 As he come rydyng ouyr the lee :  
 Sehe put on hur a garment of palle,  
 And mett the marchand in the halle,  
 Twyes or thryes, or euyr he wyste,  
 Trewly sche had hym kyste.<sup>1</sup> 200  
 Syr, sehe seyde, be seynt Johne,  
 Ye were neuyr halfe so welcome home.  
 Sche was a sehrewe, as haue y hele,<sup>2</sup>  
 There sehe eurrayed fauell<sup>3</sup> well.  
 Dame, he seyde, be seynt Johne,  
 ȝyt ar not we at oon ;<sup>4</sup>  
 Hyt was tolde me beyonde the see,  
 Thou haste another leman then me,  
 All the gode that was thyn and myne,  
 Thou haste geuyn hym, be seynt Martyn. 210

<sup>1</sup> " Er than euer the Marchande wist,  
 Tries or thries sche hem kist."

*Auchinleck MS.*

<sup>2</sup> Health.

<sup>3</sup> Favour.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* we are not reconciled—we are not at one :—

" *M. Mery.* Bee not at one with hir upon any amendes.

*R. Roister.* No, though she make to me never so many  
 frendes."—*Ralph Royster Doyster,*

ed. Cooper, p. 71.

Syr, as Cryste bryng me fro bale,  
 Sche lyeth falsely that tolde the that tale;  
 Hyt was thy wyfe, that olde crate,<sup>1</sup>  
 That neuyr gode worde by me spake;  
 Were sche dedd (god lene<sup>2</sup> hyt wolde!)  
 Of the haue alle my wylle y schulde:  
 Erly, late, lowde and styлле,  
 Of the schulde y haue alle my wylle:  
 Ye schalle see, so muste y the,  
 That sche lyeth falsely on me. 220  
 Sche leyde a canvas on the flore,  
 Longe and large, styffe and store,  
 Sche leyde thereon, wythowten lyte,  
 Fyfty schetys waschen whyte,  
 Peeys of syluыр, masers of golde;  
 The marchand stode hyt to be holde.  
 He put hyt in a wyde sakk,  
 And leyde hyt on the hors bakk;  
 He bad hys chylde go belyue,<sup>3</sup>  
 And lede thys home to my wyue.<sup>4</sup> 230  
 The chylde on hys way ys gon,  
 The marchande come aftyr anon;  
 He caste the pakk downe in the flore,  
 Longe and large, styf and store;<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "This told the thin old crate."—*Auchinleck MS.*

<sup>2</sup> Give, or grant.

<sup>3</sup> Quickly.

<sup>4</sup> This construction is frequently found in early English compositions, and in the Scriptures.

<sup>5</sup> "*Sche sprad a kaneuas on the flore,  
 That was bothe gret [and?] store,  
 And brought forth her riche thinges.*"—*Auchinleck MS.*

How infinitely superior is the reading of the Cambridge copy!



As hyt lay on the grounde,  
 Hyt was wele worthe eccc pownde.  
 They on-dedyn the mouth aryght,  
 There they sawe a ryalle syght.  
 Syr, sayde hys wyfe, be the rode,  
 Where had ye alle thys ryalle gode? 240  
 Dame, he seyde, be Goddys are,  
 Here ys thy penyworth of ware;  
 Yf thou thynke hyt not wele besett,  
 Gyf<sup>1</sup> hyt another can be ware hytt bett:<sup>2</sup>  
 Alle thys wyth thy peny boghte y,  
 And therfore y gyf hyt the frely;  
 Do wyth alle, what so euyr ye lyste,  
 I wyll neuyr aske yow accowntys, be Cryste.  
 The marchandys wyfe to hym can say:  
 Why come ye home in so febulle array? 250  
 Then seyde the marehand sone ageyn:  
 Wyfe, for to assay the in certeyn;  
 For at my lemman was y before,  
 And sehe by me sett lytylle store,  
 And sehe louyd bettyr my gode then me,  
 And so, wyfe, dyd neuyr ye.  
 To telle hys wyfe then he began  
 All that gode he had taken fro hys lemman;  
 And alle was becawse of thy peny,  
 Therfore y gyf hyt the frely; 260  
 And y gyf god a vowe thys howre,  
 Y wylle neuyr more have paramowre,

<sup>1</sup> Give.<sup>2</sup> Better.

But the, myn own derlyng and wyfe,  
 Wyth the wylle y lede my life.  
 Thus the marehandys eare be gan to kele;<sup>1</sup>  
 He lefte hys folye euery dele,  
 And leuyd in elennesse and honestè;  
 Y pray God, that so do we.  
 God, that ys of grete renowne,  
 Saue alle the gode folke of thys towne :  
 Jhesu, as thou art heuyn kynge,  
 To the blys of heuyn owre soules brynge.

**Amen! Amen!**<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* to subside; more literally speaking, to cool.

<sup>2</sup> The Auchinleck copy terminates thus: —

“The gode wüf seighe al that riche thing,  
 And thonked Jhesu heuen kinge,  
 That he hath the gode hom brought,  
 And hath turned his thought  
 To live with hir in Godes lay;  
 Blithe and glad sche was that day.  
 Ynough thai hadde of warldes wele:  
 To gider thai liued zeres fele.  
 Thai ferd miri, and so mot we,  
 Amen, amen, par charifè!”





## A Mery Geste How the Plowman Lerned his Pater Noster.

¶ HERE begynneth a lytell geste how the plowman  
lerned his pater noster.

[Woodcut of four labourers.]

n. d. 4°, four leaves, black letter, with one of Wynkyn de  
Worde's devices (No. vi. of Dibdin's list) on the last page.

The present tract, which is one of the numerous productions in which ploughmen figure as the heroes or principal interlocutors, forms a suitable companion to the three pieces which have preceded it. The extreme popularity of *Piers Ploughman*, of which numerous MSS. must have once been in existence, led, of course, to many imitations of a more or less successful kind, though all on a very different scale, and among the rest to the "Geste how the plowman lerned his pater noster," the author of which is anonymous. A copy is preserved in the Public Library at Cambridge.

The scene of the adventure which is related in the following pages is laid in France, and the production is not unlikely to have been taken from the French. No. 27 of *Mery Tales and Quicke Answeres* is an anecdote of the "Plough man that sayde his pater noster." It has nothing whatever in common with the present story, which, it may be added, has been previously printed very negligently in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*.

¶ Here begynneth a lytell geste how the plowman  
lerned his pater noster.



SOMTYME in Fraunce dwelled a plowman,  
Whiche was myghty bolde and stronge ;  
Good skylle he coude in husbondry,  
And gate his lyvyng full merely.  
He coude eke sowe and holde a plowe,  
Bothe dyke, hedge, and mylke a cowe,  
Thresshe, fane, and gelde a swyne,  
In every season and in tyme ;  
To mowe and repe both grasse and corne  
A better labourer was never borne ;  
He coude go to plowe with oxen and hors,  
With whiche it were, he dyde not fors ;  
Of shepe the wolfe of for to shere,  
His better was founde no where ;  
Strype<sup>1</sup> hempe he coude to cloute his shone,  
And set gese a brode in season of the mone.  
Of fruyte he graffed many a tre,  
Fell wode, and make it as it sholde be.  
He coude theche a hous, and daube a wall ;  
With all thyng that to hushondry dyde fall.  
By these to ryche he was brought,  
That golde ne sylver he lacked nought ;  
His hall rofe was full of bakon flytches,  
The chambre charged was with wyches  
Full of egges, butter and chese,

10

20

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<sup>1</sup> Original has *srtype*.

Men that were hungry for to ease ;  
 To make good ale, malte had he plentye ;  
 And Martylmas befe to hym was not deynty ;  
 Onyons and garlyke had he inowe ;  
 And good creme, and mylke of the cowe. 30  
 Thus by his labour ryche was he in dede ;  
 Now to the mater wyll I procede.  
 Grete good he gate and lyved yeres fourty,  
 Yet coude he neyther *pater noster* nor *ave*.  
 In Lenten tyme the parsone dyde hym shryve ;  
 He sayd : Syr, canst thou thy byleve ?  
 The plowman sayd unto the preste :  
 Syr, I byleve in Jhesu Cryste,  
 Whiche suffred dethe and harowed hell,  
 As I have herde myne olders tell. 40  
 The parsone sayd : Man, late me here  
 The saye devoutely thy *pater noster*,  
 That thou in it no worde do lacke.  
 Then sayd the plowman : What thyng is that,  
 Whiche ye desyre to here so sore ?  
 I herde never therof before.  
 The preest sayd : To lerne it thou arte bounde,  
 Or elles thou lyvest as an hounde :  
 Without it saved canst thou not be,  
 Nor never have syght of the Deyte ; 50  
 From ehyrche to be banysshed aye,  
 All they that can not theyr *pater noster* saye.  
 Therefore I mervayll ryght gretly,  
 That thy byleve was never taught the.  
 I echarge the, upon payne of deedly synne,  
 Lerne it, heven yf thou wylte wyne.

I wolde thresshe, sayd the plowman, yeres ten,  
Rather than I it wolde leren.

I praye the, syr persone, my counseyll kepe ;  
Ten wethers wyll I gyve the of my best shepe,

60

And thou shalte have in the same stounde

Fourty shelynges in grotes rounde,

So ye me shewe how I may heven reche.

Well, sayd the preest, I shall the teche.

Yf thou do by my counsell,

To heven shalte thou come ryght well.

The husbonde sayd : Yf ye wyll so,

What ever ye bydde me, it shall be do.

Well, sayd the persone, syth thou haste graunt

Truly to kepe this covenannt,

70

To do as I shall warne the shortly,

Marke well the wordes that I saye to the.

Thou knowest that of corne is grete skarsnesse.

Wherby many for hungre dye doubtlesse,

Bycause they lacke theyr dayly brede ;

Hondredes this yere I have sene dede ;

And thou haste grete plentye of whete.

Whiche men for moneye now can not gete.

And yf thou wylte do after me,

Fourty poore men I shall sende the.

80

And to eche of them gyve more or lasse,

Or they awaye fro the passe.

I shall the double for thy whete paye,

Se thou bere truly theyr names awaye,

And yf thou shewe them all and some

Ryght in ordre as they do come,

Who is served fyrst and who laste of all.

In fayth, sayd the plowman, so I shall ;

Go whan ye wyll, and sende them hyder,  
 Fayne wolde I see that company togyder. 90  
 The parsone wente to fetch the route,  
 And gadred poore people all aboute ;  
 To the plowmans hous forth he wente ;  
 The husbondeman was well contente,  
 Bycause the parsone was theyr surety.  
 That made his herte moche mere mery.  
 The preest sayd : Se here thy men echone,  
 Serve them lyghtly that they were gone.  
 The husbondeman sayd to hym agayne :  
 The lenger they tary, the more is my payne. 100  
 Fyrst wente *pater*, feble, lene and olde ;  
 Alle his clothes for hungre had he solde ;  
 Two busselles of whete gate he there,  
 Uneth for age myght he it bere.  
 Then came *noster* ragged in araye ;  
 He had his backe burden, and so wente his waye.  
 Two peckes were gyven to *Qui es in celis* ;  
 No wonder yf he halted, for kybed were his helys.  
 Then came *sanctificetur* and *nomen tuum* ;  
 Of whete amonge them they gate an hole tunne ; 110  
 How moche was therin I can not saye ;  
 They two laded a carte, and wente theyr waye.  
 In ordre folowed them other thre,  
*Adveniat, regnum, tuum*, that was deed nye ;  
 They thought to longe that they abode,  
 Yet eche of them had an hors-lode.  
 The plowman cryed : Syrs, come awaye !  
 Than wente *Fiat, voluntas, tua, sicut, in celo, et, in terra* ;  
 Some blere eyed, and some lame, with botell and bagge,  
 To cover their \* \* \* they had not an hole ragge ; 120

Aboute ten busshelles they had them amonge,  
 And in the waye homewarde full merely they songe.  
 Then came *Panem, nostrum, cotidianum, da nobis,*  
*hodie;*

Amonge them fyve they had but one peny,  
 That was gyven them for Goddes sake;  
 They sayd therwith that they wolde mery make.  
 Eche had two busshelles of whete that was gode,  
 They songe goynge home warde a Gest of Robyn Hode.  
*Et dimitte, nobis, debita, nostra,* came than;

The one sonburned, another black as a pan; 130  
 They preased in the hepe of corne to fynde;  
 No wonder yf they fell, for they were all blynde.  
 Eche of them an hole quartre they had,  
 And streyght to the ale hous they it lad.

*Sicut, et nos, dimittimus, debitoribus, nostris,*  
 Came in anone, and dyde not mys;

They had ten busshelles, withouten fayle,  
 And layde fyve to pledge for a kylderkyn of ale.  
 Than came *Et, ne, nos, inducas, in temptationem:*

Amonge them all they had quarters ten; 140  
 Theyr brede was baken in a tankarde,  
 And the resydue they played at the hasarde.

By and by came *Sed libera nos a malo;*

He was so wery he myght not go.

Also *Amen* came rennyng in<sup>1</sup> anone;

He cryed out: spede me, that I were gone;

He was patched, torne, and all to rente;

It semed by his langage that he was borne in Kente.

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<sup>1</sup> Omitted in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*.



The plowman served them everychone,  
 And was full gladde whan they were gone. 150  
 But whan he sawe of corne he had no more,  
 He wysshed them at the devyll therfore.  
 So longe had he meten his corne and whete,  
 That all his body was in a swete.  
 Than unto his hous dyde he go ;  
 His herte was full of payne and wo,  
 To kepe theyr names and shewe them ryght,  
 That he rested but lytell that nyght.  
 Ever he patred on theyr names faste,  
 Than he had them in ordre at the laste. 160  
 Than on the morowe he wente to the parsonne,  
 And sayd: Syr, for moneye am I come ;  
 My corne I delyvered by the counseyll of the,  
 Remembre thy promes, thou arte theyr suretye.  
 The preest sayd: Theyr names thou must me shewe.  
 The plowman rehersed them on a rewe ;  
 How they were called he kepte in mynde,  
 He sayd that *Amen* came all behynde.  
 The parsonne sayde: Man, be gladde this daye,  
 Thy paternoster now canst thou saye. 170  
 The plowman sayde: Gyve me my monaye.  
 The preest sayd: I owe none to the to paye ;  
 Thoughe thou dyde thy corne to poore men gyve,  
 Thou mayst me blysse whyle thou doost lyve ;  
 For by these may ye paye Cryste his rente,  
 And serve the Lorde omnipotente.  
 Is this the answeare, he sayd, that I have shall ?  
 I shall sommon the afore the offycyall.  
 So to the courte wente they bothe indede ;

Not best of all dyde the plowman spede. 180  
 Unto the offycyall the parsone tolde all,  
 How it bytwene them two dyde fall,  
 And of this *pater noster* lernynge.  
 Many to his wordes gave herkenynge.<sup>1</sup>  
 They laughed, and made sporte inowe ;  
 The plowman for angre bended his browe,  
 And sayd : This poore men have a way all my corne,  
 And for my labour the parsone dothe me skorne.  
 The offycyall praysed gretly the parsone,  
 And sayd ryght well that he had done.  
 He sayd : Plowman, it is shame to the, 190  
 To aceuse this gentylman before me.  
 He badde hym go home, fole as he was,  
 And aske God mercy for his trespas.  
 The plowman thought ever on his whete,  
 And sayd : Agayne I shall it never gete.  
 Than he wente, and to his wyfe sayd,  
 How that the parsone had hym betrayde ;  
 And sayd : Whyle that I lyve, certayne  
 Preest shall I never trust agayne.  
 Thus for his corne that he gave there, 200  
 His *pater noster* dyde he lere ;  
 And after longe he lyved withouten stryfe,  
 Tyll he wente from his mortall lyfe.  
 The persone diseased after also ;  
 Theyr soules I truste to heven dyde go.  
 Unto the whiche he us brynge,  
 That in heven reygneeth eternall kynge.

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<sup>1</sup> This line is omitted in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*.



## The Lyfe of Roberte the Deuyll.

SO much has been said, in the preliminary observations to the article which immediately follows the present one, touching the origin and character of the various extant narratives, both in prose and verse, illustrative of the singular and miraculous history of ROBERT THE DEVIL, that it is quite unnecessary to enter here into any detail. The text which is given in these pages is the same (excepting a few emendations) as that published in 1798,<sup>1</sup> from a supposed transcript of the edition printed by Wynkyn de Worde or Pynson, in 4°. , no perfect copy of which had then, or has since, been seen. The editor of 1798, however, had the use of a fragment of six leaves, which he collated with the MS.

In the Introduction to *Kynge Roberd of Cicyll*, I have mentioned the very close resemblance which the prose and metrical versions of *Robert the Deuyll* bear to each other.

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<sup>1</sup> Roberte the Deuyll. A Metrical Romance. From an Ancient Illuminated Manuscript. London: Printed for I. Herbert. 1798. 8°.

¶ Here begynneth the Lyfe of Roberte the Deuyl.



YSTEN, lordinges, that of marueyles lyke to  
heare,

Of actes that were done sometye in dede  
By oure elders, that before vs were :

How some in myschiette their lyfe dyd leade.

And in this boke may ye se, yf that ye will rede,

Of one Robert the deuyll, borne in Normandye,

That was as uengeable a man as myght treade

On goddes grounde : for he deltyed all in tyranye.

A Duke<sup>1</sup> sometye in Normandye there was,

Full uertuous and deuoute in all hys lyuyng; 10

And in almose dedes. He yede in the waye of grace,

Of knyghtlye maners, and manfull in iustynge :

A Lordlye parson, also courtes in euery thyng.

Hys dwellynge was at Nauerne vpon sayne<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The prose romance opens thus:—"It befel in tyme past, there was a duke in Normandye which was called Ouberte, the whiche duke was passynge ryche of goodes, and also vertuous of lyuyng, and loued and dred God above all thyng, and dyde grete almesse dedes, and excuded all other in ryghtwysnesse and justyce, and moost cheualrouse in dedes of armes and notable actes doynge."

<sup>2</sup> "This duke helde open house upon a Crystmasse daye, in a towne whiche was called Naverne, upon the Seyne."—*Prose Version*. In *Syr Gowgther*, the scene is shifted to Austria:—

"There was a duk in *Ostrych*  
Weddyd a lady nobil and riche,  
She was fayre of flessch and felle;

At Chrystmas, to honoure that holy tyme,  
Open housholde he kepte, and to please God was fayne.

A feaste he helde vpon a certayne daye.

Lordes come thyther of greate renowne ;  
And as they sate at dyner, a knyght gan saye  
Vnto the Duke, and on hys knees kneled downe : 20  
My lorde, he sayd, ye be owner of many a towne,  
Yet haue ye no lady, nor none heyre,  
After your dayes to reioyce youre grounde ;  
Therfore gett youe a princes, that ys yonge and fayre.

Wyueles longe, said the duke, haue I taryed,  
And lyued sole withoute any mate.

I se well yt ys youre wyll, that I shoulde be maryed ;  
But yet woulde I have one to myne estate  
Aecordynge : for and I shoulde take  
A Lady of nobler bloude than I am, 30  
Or else of lower degre, soone shoulde I forsake  
Myne owne worship, and lyue lyke no man.

Yf I shoulde nowe wedde, and after repent,  
And lyue in sorowe and greate langoure,  
Than myght I saye that fortune had me sent  
A chaunce mysfortunate, dystaynyng the floure  
Of noble fame that shoulde encrease myne honoure.  
Wherfore, lordes, all accordinge to prudence :  
A foresight, sayeth Salomon, ys worthe treasoure ;  
Yet be we ruled by fortune, a Lady of excellence. 40

To the lyly was likened that lady clere,  
Here body was rede as blossomes on brere  
That courteis damysell."

*Syr Gowghter, line 31.*

Than sayde to the Duke a Baron right bolde :  
 My lorde, I beseke youre grace of audyence.  
 The Duke bade hym than saye what he woulde.  
 In Burgonye, sayd the Baron, ys a ladye of reverence,  
 Daughter to the Earle ; yf yt please youre magnyficence  
 Her for to take, there wyll no man saye naye.  
 Than to hys wordes the Duke gave credence,  
 And sayde : I knowe well the Earles doughter, that lady  
     gaye.

In processe, that lady to the Duke was maryed ;  
 A feaste was made of greate solempnytye ; 50  
 And twelve<sup>1</sup> yeaes together they taryed  
 In wealth and greate prosperytye.  
 Goddes lawe they kepte, and lyued vertuouslye :  
 Yet chylde together had they none.  
 They prayed to God with heart deuoutlye,  
 . Yf yt pleased hym for to sende them one.  
 Euer they prayed, but yt woulde not be ;  
 In twelve yeaere chylde had they none.

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<sup>1</sup> In *Syr Gowghter*, the period is shorter, but the story is substantially the same :—

“ Full vii yere togeder thei were,  
 He gat no childe, ne none she bere,  
     Here ioy gan wex full thenne.  
 As it bifill vpon a day,  
 To the lady he gan say :  
     Now mote we part a twene,  
 But ye myght a childe bere,  
 That myght my londes weld and were ;  
     She wept and myght not blynne.”

*Syr Gowghter*, line 52.

Good dedes they dyd, and gave almose plentye :  
 Alacke, said thys Ladye, shall I lyve alone? 60

Ofte she syghed, and made greate mone,  
 That no chylde on her body woulde sprynge.  
 The good Duke also ever dyd grone,  
 And sayed: good Jesu! yet heare my cryenge.

Lorde, sende me a chylde the worlde to multyplye,  
 The Duke sayde, yf it be thy wyll ;  
 My wyfe soroweth in her partye ;  
 I feare that she wyll her selfe spyll.  
 Nothinge to the lorde that ys vnpossyble ;  
 Nowe heare my prayer for loue of thy mother ; 70  
 Sende me a chylde, my petycion to fullfyll :  
 For to be myrry I desyre none other.

And on a tyme the Duke and Duches walked<sup>1</sup>  
 In a garden by them selfe alone.  
 Eche of them complayned, and to other talked,  
 Howe they could have no chylde, and made much mone  
 Full greate, and saide: joy have we none.  
 I curse them, saide the Duke, that made the maryage :  
 For I had leuer to have lyued styll alone.  
 Chylde have I none to reioyce myne herytage. 80

And said: yf I had be maryed to another ladye,  
 I knowe that I should have had chyl dren ynowe.  
 The Duches aunswered as for her partye :  
 Yf I had chaunged, verylye I trowe

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<sup>1</sup> "Upon a tyme, this duke and duchesse walked, and the duke began to shewe hys mynde to his ladye, saynge, 'Madame, we be not fortunate in so much that we can gete noo chyl dren, and they that made the maryage betwene us bothe they dyde grete synne.'"—*Prose Version*.

That chyldern I shoulde haue had ; none haue I by  
youe.

Let vs thanke god of that he doth vs sende :

For I belave, and do verely trowe,

That all oure sorowe he may yt amende.

So, on a morowe, the Duke went on huntynge.<sup>1</sup>

Hys hearte was fullfylled all with thought ; 90

In hys mynde [he] chydde and, agayne god grudgyng,

He sighed sore inwordlye and ofte ;

If he myght haue dyed, nothyng he rought ;

And sayde : god loueth not me, all in dyspayre.

Many women haue chyldren, but myne nought ;

Alas, I trowe I shall haue none to be myne heyre.

The fende tempted soore the Duke tho,

That he wyst not what to do nor saye.

He left huntynge, and homewarde he dyd go,

And in to hys chaumber he toke the waye. 100

So there the Duches at the same tyme laye,

In as greate trouble as her husbande was ;

And to her lorde saide, no chylde I beare maye ;

I am vnhappye ; and therewith sayde alas.

He toke her in hys armes,<sup>2</sup> and her kyste ;

And of that Lady he had all hys pleasure,

<sup>1</sup> "This duke upon a tyme rode oute on hountyng in a grete angre and pensyfness, for thought that he coulede haue no chylde," &c.—*Prose Version*.

<sup>2</sup> This is related differently and more succinctly in *Syr Goughter* :—

"As she walkyd yn here orcheyerde vppon a day,  
She met a man in a riche aray ;  
Of loue he here bisowght :



And so begate a chylde, and yt not wyste.  
 The Duke to onre Lorde made hys prayer,  
 For to sende hym a chylde for to gladde hys chere.  
 The<sup>1</sup> ladye saide: the Deuyll nowe send vs one: 110  
 For god wyll not oure petycion heare;  
 Therefore I trowe power hath he none.  
 She sayde: yf I be conceyued thys houre nowe,

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He come in liknesse of here lorde free;  
 Vnder nethe a chestayn tree,  
 His will with her he wrought.  
 Whan he had his will y doon,  
 A fowle fend he stode vppe soon;  
 He lokid and hire byhilde,  
 And said: dame, I haue gete on the  
 A childe, that yn his yougthe wild shal be  
 His wepen for to welde.  
 She blessid here, and from him ran,  
 Intill here chamber anon she cam,  
 That was so stronge of belde;  
 She said to here lorde so mylde:  
 To nyght I hope to conceyue a childe,  
 That shall yowre londes welde.  
 An angel, that was so faire and bright,  
 Told me so this yonder nyght,  
 I truste to Cristis sonde,  
 That he woll stynt vs of owre strife."

In *Syr Gowghter* we are told that the hero was "Merlin's half-brother:" for "an feende gat them bothe." The remainder of the narrative is an abridgment of the longer romance here printed.

<sup>1</sup> "But the ladye being so sore moued, spake thus folyschly, and said: 'In the deuyles name be it, in so muche as God hath not the power that I conceyue, and yf I be conceyued with chylde in this houre, I gyve it to the deuyll, body and soule.'"—*Prose Version*.

I geve yt to the deuyll both soule and bodye.  
 Lo, thys lady was nere folysshe I trowe,  
 And fullfylled with greate obstynaeye.  
 Her owne soule there she put in greate ieopardye :  
 For that houre she dyd conceyve with a man chylde.  
 That, when he was borne, lyued mysehecuouslye,  
 In thefte and murder lyke a tyraunte wylde. 120

The tyme drewe so, that nyne monethes was past :  
 Than her tyme drewe on verye nye.  
 At the houre of byrth she laboured fast,  
 More than a moneth, the boke doth speeyfye.  
 She had many throwes with many a pythecous erylde :  
 Ladyes prayed for her, and gaue almesc dede ;  
 They trowed verelye that she shoulde dye ;  
 With that our ladye wold her helpe and spede.

And assone as Robert the deuyll was borne,  
 The skyes waxed blaeke,<sup>1</sup> that yt was wonder ; 130  
 And sodenlye there began a full greate storme :  
 Rayne, lyghtenyng, with horrible thonder.  
 They feared that the house woulde ryue a sonder.  
 Then blewe the wynde with greate power,  
 That they wende the dome had be<sup>2</sup> comen there :  
 For downe wente wyndowes and euery doore,

Halfe the house the deuyll pulled downe,  
 Yet at the last the wether waxed cleare.

<sup>1</sup> " ——— whan this chylde was borne, the skye waxed as darke as though it had been nyghte, as it is shewed in old cronycles, that it thondreth and lyghtened so sore, that men thought the firmament had been open, and all the worlde sholde haue perysshed."—*Prose Version*.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. 1798 has *he*.

So for dreade thys lady laye in a sowne,  
That greate wetherynge she dyd sore feare. 140  
Her gentlewomen bade her be of good chere ;  
They told her that the wather was gone and past ;  
Then to the churehe the chylde they dyd bear,  
And chrystened yt Robert at the last.

He was as bygge the same daye,  
As some chylde of twelue monethes olde.  
When they came from Churche, he cryed all the  
waye,

That yt made many hym to beholde.  
Men sade the chylde loked very bolde.  
Hys teeth grewe fast ; when that he shoulde soueke, 150  
The noryshe nypples so harde byte he woulde,  
That yt went then to her verye hearte roote.

There durst no woman geue hym sucke in faye :  
For hys teeth grewe so peryllousslye,  
That the norysse nypples he bote a waye ;  
But than they woulde no more byde the ieopardye.  
So with an horne he was fedde trewlye.  
At the years ende, he could bothe go and speake.  
The elder he waxed, the more vnhappye  
Shrewdenes he woulde do bothe in house and streate. 160

Hurte woulde he do to woman and man ;  
Vngracious was he daye and nyght.  
Yf he amonge any chyl dren came,  
He woulde them hurte, bothe seratche and byte,  
Caste stones at theyr heades, and fyght,  
Breake their shynnes, and put some eyes oute.  
Lordes and ladyes of hym had greate delyght,  
And wende yt had ben but wantonnes with oute doute.

Mennes chyldren there he dyd muehe harme ;  
 Of them he hurte shrewdelye many a one, 170  
 Break[ yng ]e bothe legges, headde and arme.  
 Therefore he was beloued of none ;  
 Hys companye chyldren forsoke euerychone ;  
 They dyd flee fro hym, as the deuyll fro holy water.<sup>1</sup>  
 We wyll not haue hym amonge vs to come,  
 They sayd : and he never do, we be the gladder.

For, and the chyldern had seen hym come  
 In to the streate, there for to playe,  
 They woulde take theyr legges, and away runne  
 To theyr fathers, as faste as they maye. 180  
 Roberte the Deuyll dothe come, they woulde saye :<sup>2</sup>  
 For younge chyldren gave hym that name.  
 The chyldren hydde them in eorners euery day,  
 And to runne from hym they woulde leaue their game.

And whan that he was aboute seuen yeare of aege,  
 Hys father sette hym to scole in dede  
 With a dyscrete man and a sage,  
 And prayed hys sonne, that he woulde spede,  
 For to learne bothe to wryte and reade ;  
 And to Roberte the Deuyll hys father sayde : 190  
 Sonne, yf thy lyfe in vertue thoue leade,  
 Than wyll I with the be right well a payed.

<sup>1</sup> This expression is not found in the prose romance.

<sup>2</sup> “——but whan they se hym they durst not abyde hym, but cryed one to another, ‘ Here cometh the wode Robert ; ’ an other many cryed, ‘ Here cometh the cursed madde Robert,’ and some cryed, ‘ Here cometh Robert the Deuyll,’ and thus cryenge they voyded all the stretes.”—*Prose Version*.

Roberte the Deuyll wente to scole a lytell space,  
 And euer he thought yt to longe ywys.  
 He learned so that he was past all grace ;  
 Yt happened at the last he dyd amysse ;  
 Hys master sayd : Syr, youe muste amende thys,  
 Or elles forsothe ye shalbe beate.  
 He sayde : yf thou smyte me, I wyll make the wysshe,  
 That thou thyne owne fleshe rather had eate. 200

Naye, sayde hys master, ye be to bolde ;  
 And toke a rodde for to chaste hym soone.  
 So to beate hym he sayde that he woulde ;  
 Roberte sawe what he purposed to done,  
 And sayde : ye were better lette me a lone :  
 For with a dagger he thrust hym in to the bellye,  
 That the bloude ran downe in to hys shone ;  
 So [he] slewe hys master, and let hym deade lye.<sup>1</sup>

Whan Robert the Deuyll sawe hys master fall,  
 He sayde he woulde go to scole no more. 210  
 Hys boke he threwe agaynste the wall.  
 The deuyll have the whyt that he was forye therfore ;  
 Alacke he made hys fathers hearte soore.  
 When that he hys master had slayne,  
 The Duches eursed the houre that he was bore ;  
 She sayde : of hys companye no man is<sup>2</sup> fayne,

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<sup>1</sup> "It fell upon a daye that hys scole mayster sholde chastyse Robert, and would have made hym to have lefte his cursed cōdycyons ; but Robert gate a murderer or bodkin, and throst his mayster in the bely that his guttes fell at his fete, and so fell downe deed to the erth, and Robert threwe his boke ayenst the walles in despyte of his mayster," &c.—*Prose Version*.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. 1798 has *vs*.

After that, there woulde no pryst hym teache ;  
 He folowed uice, he woulde be ruled by none ;  
 And moeke prystes, whan they shoulde preache.  
 For, and he into the ehurche had gone, 220  
 He would skorne the clearkes euerychone,  
 And when they songe, come them behynde,  
 So threwe dust in theyr mowthes by one and one,  
 And some in theyr eyes to make them blynde.

Yf he sawe any men or women deuoutlye knele,  
 For to serue God with theyr prayer, or stande,  
 Pryuelye behynde them woulde he steale,  
 And geue them a sowee with hys hande,  
 To eause some to yell out theyr tongues longe ;  
 Or els he woulde make theyr heades go to grounde. 230  
 Theyr neckes he hurte sore, he was so stronge ;  
 And many olde folkes he caused to sounde.

Yt was vnpossible for a clarke to write<sup>1</sup>  
 The dedes he dyd, that weare full vengeable.  
 Then gentlemen, that weare saddle and dyscrete,  
 Complayned to hys father withoute fable.  
 The Duke sayde : to chaste hym I am not able.  
 Than Robert was brought before hym ;  
 He sayde : Sonne, thy dedes ben reproueable ;  
 Thou shamest me and all thy hole kynne. 240

Thow doest all thyng that dyspleaseth God ;  
 Thy scolemaster thou slewest with a knyfe,  
 Because that he woulde haue beate the with a rodde ;  
 To the prystes in churche thou doest much greyfe ;

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<sup>1</sup> This and the following twenty lines do not seem to be in the prose version.

Full ofte I wyshe me oute of my lyfe :  
 For thou of thy dedes arte so hounge and peryllouse,  
 That chyl dren younge, bothe mayde and wyfe,  
 Whych dothe the knowe, geueth the theyr curse.

All one wyth hym : in at the one eare and out at  
 the other.

He was neuer the better, daye nor nyght. 250  
 Hys olde laye kept, he woulde do none other ;  
 He was neuer glad but when he dyd fyght ;  
 To swere and lye, theryn he had greate delyght.  
 At last<sup>1</sup> hys mother to her lorde spake,  
 And sayd : yt were best to make hym a knyght ;  
 Thys noble ordre let Robert the deuyll take.

For I trust then he wyll amende,  
 Whan he that greate othe doth heare ;  
 Yt wyll make hym sorye for that he dyd offende,  
 And the workes of God hereafter for to leare. 260  
 The Duke consented euen ryght there,  
 And asked Robert, yf he woulde lyue vnder awe  
 Of God, and the order of knight-hode beare,  
 He aunswered : I sett not thereby a strawe.

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<sup>1</sup> "This duke assembled, upon a hye feast of Whytsontyde, all his barons and nobles of his lande, and the next of his kyn and frendes, in the presence of whome he called his sone to hym, saynge thus : 'Herke, my sone Robert, and take hede what I shall tell you ; it is so that by thaduyce of my counsell and good frendes, I am now aduysed to make you a knyght, to thentent that ye with other knyghtes to haunte chevalrye and knyghtes condycyons, to thentente that ye shall leue and forsake your uyces and moost hatfull lyf.' Robert, herynge this, answered his fader : 'I shall do your comandment ; but as for the ordre of knyghthode I set nothyng thereby,'" &c.—*Prose Version.*

At the last, Robert was made a knyght ;<sup>1</sup>  
 Hys father bade hym take hede of hys othe,  
 To dystroye wronge, and to maynteyne right,  
 And do trewe justyce for leefe or for lothe :  
 For a knyght, that in cheualrye goethe,  
 Euer agaynst vice he muste fyght, 270  
 And supporte trewe maydens ; and he so dothe,  
 He ys an inherytoure of heauen, goddes own knyght.

Robert aunswered : father, at youre commandement,  
 I wyll thys greate order vpon me take ;  
 But for to chaunge all myne entent,  
 As for my manners, I wyll not forsake.  
 All men shall not ones me make  
 For to leaue my customes old ;  
 I will contynewe, and neuer wyll slake,<sup>2</sup>  
 Thoughe I therfore my lyfe lose shoulde. 280

The Duke caused a greate iustynge to be ;  
 Lordes came fro many a farre lande,  
 And Ladyes also, that runnyng to see,  
 He that shoulde be moste doughtye of hande.  
 There was many a knyght full stronge,  
 That thought theyr clothes of full greate pryce :  
 Yet a gayne Roberte there myght none stande,  
 As for worship by hym woulde none ryse.

A fylde was ordeyned bothe brode and wyde,  
 With lystes fayre where they shoulde runne ; 290

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<sup>1</sup> Knighthood was anciently a great mark of distinction, and not, as it subsequently became, a mere source of revenue or a political bribe. The Black Prince was considered eligible for spurs when he was no more than fifteen.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. 1798 has *flake*.



Tentes were pyght on euery syde;  
 Greate was the people that thether come.  
 The daye was fayre; hote shone the sonne.  
 Greate trumpets blewe; the herauldes made theyr  
     erye,

That euery knyght hys deuoure<sup>1</sup> shoulde done,  
 For to proue who was moste myghtye.

Knightes then dressed them to the fyelde  
 In Syluer armoure, fayre and bright;  
 Barons doughtye with speare and shyld,  
 With helmes and haubreks that all the fyelde dyd  
     lyght; 300

Stedes in trappoure the[r] was a goodlye syght;  
 Speare heades that a stronge cote woulde saylle;  
 Clothe of golde in harnes curyouslye pyght;  
 Worne of haburgin many a stronge mayle.

Robert the deuyll came in as meke as a Lyon,<sup>2</sup>  
 In hys fyste he had a greate speare,  
 Of sure wodde both toughe and longe;  
 Hys loke so grymme many men dyd feare,  
 Also that houghe staffe that he dyd beare  
 Was almost as bygge as some twayne. 310  
 Vnoceupyed, saide Robert, why stande we here?  
 For to leaue all worke he woulde full fayne.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. 1798 has *deuourne*.

<sup>2</sup> "Then this duke comaunded a tournament to be made, in the which the said Robert wrought mayst[r]yes, and dyde meruaylous dedes of armes, in kyllynge and berynge downe hors and man, no man refusynge nor ferynge. Of some he brake armes, and some legges, and bare them thorowe, and kylled them out of hande," &c.—*Prose Version*.

The Duke bade them all to begynne.  
 A fayre knyght then sentred<sup>1</sup> hys speare ;  
 In fayth, sayde Robert, I wyll runne to hym ;  
 And lyghtly<sup>2</sup> turned hys greate stede theare.  
 Eche agayne other speares dyd beare ;  
 Those coursers dyd runne ; they smote in the fyeelde ;  
 Hartye were bothe ; nought dyd they feare.  
 That knyght smote Robert sore in the shyelde, 320  
 That the stroke made Robert right wrothe.  
 To hym he thought for to ryde agayne ;  
 He sentred<sup>2</sup> hys speare, and forthe he gothe.  
 With hys shyelde Robert mette playne,  
 And stroke so soore that he smote it euē iu twayne,  
 And throughe the knyghtes shulder the speare dyd  
 runne.  
 I trowe therof Robert was fayne,  
 And asked yf any more woulde come.  
 Auother knyght thought Robert to assaylle,  
 So yode they together with greate raundone. 330  
 Loth were they bothe for to fayle,  
 And hastelye theyr stedes strongelye dyd runne.  
 So swyfte with strenght Robert dyd come,  
 That hys speare ran thorowe the knyghtes bodye,  
 And to the earthe dead fell he downe.  
 All men wondred of Robert trewlye.  
 The thyrde knyght to the grounde he smote,  
 And brake hys horse backe asonder.  
 There was none that myght stande a stroke  
 Of hym that daye. Nowe the people dyd wonder 340  
 To se that all knyghtes to hym wer vnder :

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. of 1798 has *fentred*.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

For so soore Robert dyd them assayle,  
 A man had ben as good to haue be smytten with thonder,  
 As to haue a stroke of hys hand, without fayle.

Thre noble Barons he slewe there that daye.  
 He fared as he had ben a fyende of hell ;  
 All was in earneste, and not in playe :  
 Fro theyr horses many knyghtes he fell,  
 And brake theyr armes, as the bokes do tell.  
 For he threwe [theym] so greselye and soore, 350  
 That they knewe nother wo nor well ;  
 On stedes myght they ryde never more.

All that he mette, he them downe threwe ;  
 Yonge nor olde he spared none :  
 For pittye had he no more than a Jue.  
 That daye he hurte there many a one,  
 And lyke a boore at the mouth he dyd fome ;  
 He fought and stroke all, while that he was able  
 In peace he woulde not haue them to stande alone ;  
 He loued murderers that were euer vengeable. 360

To kill and slea was all hys delyght.  
 Tenne noble stedes backes he dyd Brust,  
 When that he at theyr masters dyd smyte,  
 Or with hys speare at them dyd thrust.  
 To fight euer more and more he had lust :  
 For all hys pleasure was in deathe sett,  
 And euer he cryed : who wyll more iuste ?  
 The deuyll was in hym ; no man myght hym lette.

And whan hys father sawe, howe in vengeaunce  
 He was sett, and woulde no sad wayes take, 370  
 In hys thought he toke greate greuance,  
 And bade that all the knyghtes shoulde departe,  
 Eche theyr waye, and no more justes to make.

Than Robert woulde not obey the commaundement  
Of hys father, but sayd sorowe shoulde awake :  
For then in myscheif he sett all hys entente.

He woulde not go fro the battaylle,  
But hue and slewe on euery syde.  
The stronge knightes there he dyd assaylle ;  
All the people fledde, they durst not abyde ;  
The knyghtes all awaye dyde tyde,  
With lordes and Ladyes eueryehone.  
Robert loughe, whan he that spyed ;  
Than, thought he, I will no more go home.<sup>1</sup>

350

Than Robert rode into the countrey,  
And robbed and kyllled many a one.  
Maydens and wyues he rauyshed pytteouslye ;  
He pulled downe abbeyes and houses of stone.  
For [of] all the Churches that he dyd by come,  
Thorowe that countrey of Normandye,  
By hys wyll there shoulde stande none :  
For all hys pleasure was in murder and robberye.

390

He brente houses, and slewe yonge chyldren ;  
Death vpon death was all hys lyfe.  
The countrey complayned to hys father,  
Howe theyr seruantes were slayne with Robertes knyfe.  
Some sayde: he hathe rauyshed my wyfe,  
And by oure doughters he hathe layne ;  
They prayed the Duke to stynte that stryfe,  
Or to flee that lande they would full fayne.

400

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<sup>1</sup> "Than whan Robert se there was no man more lefte in the felde, and that he coude do no more myschef there, than he toke his horse with the spores to seke his adventures, and began to do every day more harm than other one," &c.—*Prose Version*.

The Duke wepte and sayde : alas,  
That euer I hym begate on woman.  
My prayer vnto Jesu euer was,  
For to sende me a chylde : for I had none.  
And nowe gode hath sente me one,  
That maketh me full heauy and sad.  
The Duches wayled, and made great mone,  
That from her mynde she was nye madde.

The Duke made hys seruantes to ryde  
To seke Robert, in Cyttie and in towne ; 410  
Good watche was layde on euery syde,  
On holte and heath, in fyelde and towne.  
And in euery place that they dyd come,  
The countrey Robert dyd curse and blame,  
And prayed that he myght haue an yll death soone :  
For he the ordre of knyghthode dothe shame.

With Robert at the last these men mette.  
They sayde that he shoulde with them then<sup>1</sup> goo ;  
All aboute Robert shortlye they sette ;  
One asked hym what he woulde doo : 420  
Wylt thou go with vs ? he sayde noo ;  
And drewe hys sworde, and with them dyd fyght.  
Full greate woundes he gaue one or twoo,  
And all the resydue he put to flyght.

And all that he toke he put theyr eyes oute,  
So bade them go seke theyr way home,  
And serued them all so withoute doute ;  
These poore men they made greate mone ;  
So Robert departed and lefte them alone,

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. 1798 has *them*.

And sayde: tell my father that yt ys for hys sake. 430  
 Then these men in tyme to the courte came home,  
 And shewed what mastryes Robert dyd make.

Thys good Duke in hearte was right wo,  
 When he sawe hys mennes eyes oute.  
 Fore angre he wyst not what to do,  
 But commaunded all the courte aboute,  
 Counstable and bayllifes with all theyr route,  
 All men to take hym who so maye,  
 And in pryson to put hym without doute,  
 He charged all men good watche to laye. 440

So when Robert knewe of thys warke,<sup>1</sup>  
 He gathered a great companye theues yll.  
 He gate hym into a forrest full darke,  
 Where yt was farre from boroughe or hyll.  
 There he lyued, and all dyd he kyll,  
 That he myght se in the heath so playne;  
 Corne and fruites all dyd he spyll;  
 In doynge myscheif allwaye was he fayne.

Yt was hys pleasure to eate fleshe on the frydaye;  
 A dogge dyd faste as well as he. 450  
 Poore pylgrymes he kyllled goynge by the waye,  
 And holy hermytes that lyued deuoutlye.  
 So on a daye he rose vppe earlye,  
 And in the forrest seuen hermytes he founde,  
 Before a crosse knelynge on theyr knee;  
 Of theyr prayers to heauen wente the sownde.

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<sup>1</sup> In the prose romance, Robert is supposed to have a band about him before the Duke's proclamation appears. "Whan Roberte herde of this proclamation, he *with all his company* were sore aferde of the dukes malyce," &c.

What, holy whoresones, he sayde, by youe,  
 That gapeth vpwardes after the moone?  
 If ye be a thrust, ye shall drynke now; ;  
 And oute he drewe hys swearde full soone. 460  
 The hermytes wist no what to done,  
 But suffered death for Jesus sake.  
 So throughe one of theyr bodyes hys sworde dyd runne,<sup>1</sup>  
 For feare all the other dyd tremble and quake.

Than he strake of theyr heades all,  
 And reioysed at that peryllouse dede.  
 In seorne he sayde: syrs, do youe fall,  
 Patter and praye ye in youre crede.  
 Full faste these holy men dyd blede,  
 That Robertes clothes were readde as vermulon. 470  
 With hys sworde he thought further to spede,  
 In vengeaunce he rought not where he become.

Lo, thys eaytiffe was blynde, and myght not see ;  
 The cloudes had y<sup>2</sup>-clypped the Sunne of grace ;  
 Lyke to an apple that the core dost putryfie,  
 The darke mystes of uice smote hym in the face.  
 He was none of the shepe of Israel, but the kyd of  
 golyas.

He exyled pittye, as dyd eruel Kynge Pharao ;  
 Heaped full of synne, as euer he was  
 That slewe hys own mother ; men called hym Nero. 480

Then he lefte these seuen hermytes deadde,  
 And rode oute of the wodde, lyke a wylde dragon.

<sup>1</sup> In the prose romance, a chapter is devoted to the narration of "How Robert the Deuyll killed vii heremytes."

<sup>2</sup> Ed. of 1798 has *in*. The sense is *eclipsed*.

So lyke a bore he threwe vp hys headde,  
 The bloude of the hermytes couered all hys gowne.  
 A shepherde he sawe, and rode to hym soone ;  
 But whan the herdes man dyd hym espye,  
 Yt was no hede to bydde hym begone.  
 He ranne hys waye. Then for feare dyd he crye.

At the laste he the shepherde ouertoke in faye,  
 And asked what tydynges that he woulde tell. 490  
 The shepherd agayne to hym dyd saye :  
 I was of youe afrayde, I wende ye had come oute of  
 hell ;

And as for tydynges, here ys darkenes castell ;  
 There lyeth the Duches of Normandye,  
 With many a lorde of her counsell,  
 Of all thys greate lande the royalltye.

So Robert came to the towne, there the castell stode.  
 The people sawe one ryde as he had ben madde,  
 With a sworde in hande, and all arayed in bloude.  
 To runne in to house euery man was gladde. 500  
 At the last Robert began to waxe sadde,  
 And sayde : alas, that euer I<sup>1</sup> was borne ;  
 In murder and mysehief my lyfe hane I ladde ;  
 Hys heere of hys heade he thought to haue torne.<sup>2</sup>

Than he was a bashed soore in hys mode,  
 Whan that the people woulde hym not abyde.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. of 1798 has *he*.

<sup>2</sup> "Robert seyng this, that all the people fled from hym for fere, he began to sygh in his herte, and sayd to hymselfe: 'O, Almyghty God, how may this be, that every man thus fleeth from me? Now I perceyue that I am the moost myscheuoust and the moost cursedest wretche of this worlde,'" &c.—*Prose Version*.



What yt mente than he vnderstode ;  
Euery body them selfe from hym dyd hyde.  
Than to the Castle gate Robert dyd ryde,  
And fayne with some body he woulde speake. 510  
But whan any man hym espyede,  
They ranne awaye as they dyd in the streate.

Than with a heauy hearte downe dyd he lyght,  
And went streyght into the Castell hall.  
But when the people of hym had a sight,  
None durst hym byde there at all.  
Many for helpe dyd crye and calle ;  
Hys mother sawe hym, as she sate at meate ;  
For feare she beganne to fall,  
And hasted her awaye for to gette. 520

And when he sawe hys mother goynge,  
He sayde, alas, Lady mother, speake with me.  
Hys hearte for sorowe brast in weepyng,  
Whan he sawe her from hym to flee.  
And sayde to hys mother full pitteouslye :  
Lady, tell me howe that I was borne,  
That I haue ledde my lyfe so mischeuouslye,  
In the tempests of uice, with many a greate storme.

Hys mother all unto hym tolde,  
Howe she gave hym to the fende, both soule and  
bodye. 530

And he asked her howe she durste be so bolde  
To gyue hym from god allmightye.  
I knowe, he sayd, that I haue lyued synfullye,  
As euer dyd the emperoure greate Nero,  
Amende I wyll, and for mercye crye ;  
My dedes will I bewaylle, whersoever I go.

Hys mother prayed hym to smyte of her headde :<sup>1</sup>  
 For the trespace, she sayde, that I dyd to thee ;  
 I am worthy therefore for to be deadde ;  
 To god I offended also in obstynacye. 540  
 Sleas me, she sayde, and I forgiue yt thee.  
 He sayde : Mother, I wyll not do so ;  
 I had leuer be beaten full bytterlye,  
 And on my feate to the worldes ende to go.

Than for woo Robert fell to the grounde,  
 And a greate whyle there he so laye.  
 There sodenlye he rose in that stounde,  
 And saide : Mother, nowe I go my waye,  
 To Rome wyll I hye as fast as I maye ;  
 And prayed her to eommende hym to hys father dere.  
 So he desyred them all for hym to praye, 551  
 And went forth with a full pytteous chere.

So shortly Robert toke hys horse, and rode  
 Streight vnto the forrest to hys companye.  
 Than the Duches, that in the Castle abode,  
 Shryked full sore with a full pytteous crye :  
 And saide : alas, lorde, to synfull am I.

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<sup>1</sup> "The duchesse had gretly meruaylynge, whan she herde her sone speke these wordes : and piteously wepyng, with a sorrowful herte saynge thus to hym : 'My dere sone, I requyre you hertly that ye wyll smyte of my heed.' This sayd the lady, for very grete pytè that she had upon hym, for bycause she had gyuen hym to the deuyll in his concepcyon. Robert answerde his moder with an hevy and a pyteous chere, saynge thus : 'O, dere moder, why sholde I do so, that so moche myschefe have done? and this sholde be the worste dede that euer I dyde; but I praye you to shewe me that I desyre to wete of you.'"—*Prose Version*.

All women, beware, curse neuer your chylde ;  
 And yf that ye do, then be youe in jeopardye ;  
 Also in myscheyff they shalbe defyelde.

560

Wyth that the Duke came into the chaumber,  
 And asked her why she dyd wepe and wayle.  
 She sayde : Robert youre sonue hath ben here,  
 and shewed how that he wolde to Rome without fayle.  
 Ah, sayde the Duke, I feare yt wyll lyttell auayle ;  
 He is not able to make restytucion ;  
 Alacke, sayd the Duke, yet am I gladde sauns fayle,  
 That he ys wyllynge to make hys confession.

Nowe ys Robert come to the forrest agayne,  
 And founde hys men all at dyner syttynge,<sup>1</sup>  
 To conuerte them to goodnes he would full fayne,  
 And sayde : my felowes, with pytteous lamentynge,  
 Let vs remember oure synfull lyuyng,  
 And aske god mercy with greate repentaunce.  
 Yf we leade thys lyfe styll, yt will vs brynge  
 To hell withoute ende, with horrible vengeaunce.

570

Lct vs remember, he saide, oure synfull lyfe ;  
 We haue murdered people full cruellye ;  
 Rauyshed maydens, and many a wyfe ;  
 Slayne prystes and hermytes full pytteouslye.

580

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<sup>1</sup> "Now is Robert come agayne to his companye whiche he founde syttyng at dyner, and whan they sawe hym, they rose up and dyde hym reuerence; than Robert began to rebuke theym for theyr vycyous lyuyng, sayyng thus: 'My welbeloued felowes, I requyre you in the reuerence of God, that ye wyll herken, and take hede to this that I shall shewe you. Ye knowe well how that we have ledde hetherto an ungracyous and most uycyous lyfe, robbed and pyllled chyrches,' " &c.—*Prose Version.*

And abbeys haue ben dystroyed through our robbery,  
 With Nunnes [and] Ankers. Take yt in remembraunce  
 Howe we put them in ieopardie;  
 Wherefore I dreade hell, with horrible vengeaunce.<sup>1</sup>

Houses we haue brentte many a one,  
 And spylte of chyldren much preeyous bloude.  
 Compassion there nor pyttye had we none;  
 In myseheyff we delyted, and neuer in good.  
 And nowe let vs remember hym that dyed on the rode,  
 That from vs yet hath kept hys sworde by suffer-  
 aunce :

590

For and we nowe in deathes daunce stode,  
 To hell shoulde we go, with horrible vengeaunce.

One sayde: Robert, what, be youe there?  
 And stode up, and began hym to skorne.  
 Will youe see, fellowes? the fox wylbe an anker.  
 What, master, ye be as wyse as a shepe newe shorne.  
 I trowe youre buttoeke be pryked with a thorne:  
 For your wytt ys oute of temperaunce.  
 I woulde not haue thys tearme aboute borne,  
 That we shoulde to hell go with horrible venge-  
 aunce.

600

Another [of] these saide: master Roberte, harke;  
 To preache to vs yt ys all in vayne;  
 And what I saye, I praye you yt marke.  
 Thys lyfe wyll we leade in wordes playne;  
 Euer yet in these workes we haue be fayne;  
 For our synne we entende not to do pennaunce.

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<sup>1</sup> The repetition of this phrase, at the conclusion of each stanza, is peculiar to the present version.

We wyll not forsake, thoughe ye stryue vs agayne ;  
To helle woulde we rather go, with horrible vengeance.

Than Roberte sawe, that they woulde not amende,  
But in myscheyf there to lyue styll, 610

And to the poore men they wyll ofte offende ;

Thus then he conspyred in hys wyll,

One after another for to kyll.

To make short, he kyllled them euerychone.<sup>1</sup>

He sayde : ye haue be readye euer to do euyll ;

Therefore alyue wyll I not leaue one.

He tolde them : a good seruaunte must haue good  
wages ;

Nowe do I paye youe after your deseruyng.

There dead in the floore all theyr bodyes sprayles ;

Robert shutt the doore, and they laye within ; 620

And [he] sayd : of myscheyf this ys the endyng.

So he thought to sett the house on fyre ;

But he dyd not ; he yede a waye sighyng,

And sayd : alas, I haue payde my men theyr hyre.

Than Robert toke hys horse, and blessed hym.

So throughe the forrest he toke the waye,

Ouer hylles and downes fast rydyng.

Thus rode he styll all a longe daye,

And ofte for synne he cryed well awaye.

Than of an abbaye he had a sight, 630

Whiche ofte he had robbed in good faye :

Alas, saide Robert, there will I lodge to nyght.

<sup>1</sup> In the prose romance the thread of the narrative is precisely similar ; a chapter is there set apart to shew " How Robert the Deuyll kyllled all his companye."

For faulte of meate then he hongred sore,  
 And sayde : to eate fayne I wolde haue some.  
 Alacke nowe, that euer I was bore.  
 And when the monkes dyd se hym come,  
 Eche man hys waye fast dyd ronne,  
 And saide : here cometh the furyous serpent  
 Roberte, which ys I trowe a deuylls sonne,  
 That in murther<sup>1</sup> and myscheif hath a greate talent.<sup>2</sup> 640

Than forthe he rode to the churche dore,  
 And diseended from his horse right there.  
 So he kneled downe in the floore,  
 And to oure lorde god he made hys prayer,  
 Sayinge : swete Jesu, that bought me dere,  
 Haue mercy on me for that preecyous bloude,  
 That ran from your hearte with Longus<sup>3</sup> speare,  
 Which stonge youe in the side hangynge on the roode.

Then vp he rose, and went to the Abbot,  
 And sayde to hym with pitteouse lamentynge : 650  
 I haue bene so symple, father, that ye well wot,  
 That nowe I feare the sworde that ys lyghtly<sup>4</sup> comynge  
 Of our lordes vengeaunee for my false lyuynge.  
 And of all that I haue offended vnto youe,  
 Forgeue me for hys loue that was hangynge  
 Seuen houres on the crosse, and there hys head dyd bowe.

And when they hearde hym pitteouslye complayne,  
 And in hys harde hearte [that he] toke repentaunee,

<sup>1</sup> Ed. of 1798 has *murmer*.

<sup>2</sup> In the prose story the brethren cry : "Here cometh the ungracyous Robert; the Deuyll hath brought him hether."

<sup>3</sup> Ed. of 1798 has *longis*. See St. John, xx. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Quickly, soon. French, *légèrement*.

The monekes all thereof were fayne.  
So there he tolde them all in substaunee, 660  
Howe he was in wyllynge to suffer pennaunee,  
And to Rome to take hys Journeye.  
So there he ealled to hys remembraunce  
Of hys lodge, and therof toke the abbot the keye.

Thys keye to the Abbot there he toke,  
And tolde hym that he shoulde haue all the treasure  
In the theues lodge, yf that he woulde loke,  
That he had robbed synce the fyrst houre ;  
And saide : my meynye lyen dead in the floore.  
The Abbot he prayed to geue hys father the keye : 670  
For I wyll not slepe one night, where I do another,  
Tyll I in Rome with the pope speke maye.

And praye my father to make restytucion  
For me to all them that I dyd offende.  
I erye hym merey, also I am hys sonne,  
Hym for to myseheif also I dyd entende ;  
But what thoughe nowe I trust to amende.  
There Robert toke hys leaue of all the hole couent ;  
Hys horse and hys sworde he to hys father sende ;  
And so departed, and on hys feete forth wentte. 680

Than rode the Abbot to the Duke of Normandye,  
And shewed of Robert all that was befall.  
There he delyuered vp the keye,  
And of hys entente he sheowid the Duke all.  
Then he hys men before hym dyd eall,  
And sayde : I wyll ryde and restore the goodes  
agayne ;

And euery man hys owne haue shall.  
Then were the Dukes seruauntes all fayne.

Nowe Robert walked ouer dale and hyl,  
 By holte and heath, many a wery waye. 690  
 He laboured night and daye euer styll;  
 At the last he came to Rome on Sherethursdaye.<sup>1</sup>  
 All nyght poorely in the streate he laye,  
 And on the good frydaye to churche he went ywis,<sup>2</sup>  
 Towardes the quyere, and nothyng dyd saye;  
 For that daye the Pope sayed all the seruyce.

The Popes seruantes bade hym go backe;  
 They smote Robert, and thrust hym asyde.  
 Tho to hym self he sayde: oute alacke.  
 Yet he thought boldlyer for to abyde; 700  
 Where people were thynnest there he espyed.  
 So prest amonge them, tyll he came to the pope,  
 And fell downe to hys fete, and loude there he cryed.  
 As rayne the teares fell fro hys eyes, god wotte.

The popes seruantes would haue pulled hym asyde.  
 Oure holy father yet aunswered: naye,  
 Medle not with hym, lett hym abyde,<sup>3</sup>  
 That I maye here what he dothe saye.  
 Robert aunswered: I am here thys daye,  
 The synfullest lyner that euer was founde; 710  
 Synce Adam was made in Canaan of claye,  
 I am the greatest synner that lyued on grounde.

The pope sayde: what art thou, good frende?  
 And whye makest thoue thys lamentacon?

<sup>1</sup> Otherwise called *Maundy Thursday*. "Robert went so longe ouer hylles and dales alone, tyll at last with grete payne and pouerte he came to Rome in to the cytè, upon a Shere Thursdaye at nyght."—*Prose Version*.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. 1798 has *tywys*.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. 1798 has *abyde*.



Oh, good father, saide Robert, to god I haue offended  
 I desyre youe to heare my confession,  
 Of my greate synnes the abhomynacon.  
 On them to muse yt ys vnnumerable ;  
 Vice and I rested all waye in one habytacion  
 With murder and euery vnthryfte culpable. 720

Art thou Robert the deuyll ?<sup>1</sup> sayde the pope than,  
 That ys the worst creature of all the worlde yll.  
 Yee, yee, syr, sayde Robert, I am the same man ;  
 Greate mysecheyf haue I do, and muche yll ;  
 As to robbe and slea, both burne and kyll.  
 The pope sayd : here in goddes name I thee warne,  
 By uertue of hys passion stande here styll ;  
 Do to me nor my men no maner of harme.

Naye, naye, sayde Robert, neuer chrysten man  
 Wyll I hurte by night nor daye. 730  
 The pope toke hym by the hande than,  
 And bade hym hys confession to hym saye.  
 Thereto Robert woulde not saye naye,  
 But all hys synnes confessed and tolde.  
 The pope, whan he hym hearde, dyd quake for fraye :  
 For to heare hys synnes hys hearte waxed nye colde.

And [he] tolde howe hys mother gaue hym to the  
 feende of hell  
 In the houre of hys fyrst contemplacyon.  
 The pope sayd : Robert, I thee tell,

<sup>1</sup> "The pope, herynge this, demed and thought in hymselfe whether this were Robert the Deuyll, and axed hym : 'Sone, be ye Robert the whiche I haue herde so moche spekyng of, the whiche is worst of all men ?'—*Prose Version*.

Thou must go to an hermyte three miles withoute the  
towne. 740

Robert sayde: with good will thys shalbe done.

Then wente he to the popes goostlye father;

The pope commaunded hym so to done,

That the hermyte might hys confession heare.

In the mornynge, Robert walked ouer hyll and  
dale;

He was full werye of his labourynge.

At the laste he came in to a greate vale,

And founde [the] same hermyte standinge.

He spake with the hermyte, and shewed of hys lyuynge;

And tolde that he was sente fro the pope of Rome. 750

But when that holy man hearde hys confession,

He sayed: brother, ye be right wellcome;

And for youre synnes euery one muste be sorye.

For as yet I will not assoylle youe;

In a lyttell chappell all nyght shall youe lye;

Do ye as I do youe counsell now.

Aske god merce, and let youre hearte bowe:

For all thys nyght I wyll wake and praye

Vnto our lorde, that I maye knowe,

Yf in saluacion ye do stande in the waye. 760

So they departed. The hermyte fell on slepe;

An aungell sodenlye to hym dyd appeare,

And saide: to Goddes commaundement take good  
kepe,

And of Robertes pennaunce thou shalt heare.

He muste counterfeyt a fole in all manere;

The meate that he shall eate, he muste pull yt from a  
dogge,

And neuer to speake, but as he dombe weare.  
Thys pennaunce done, he shalbe forgeuen of god.<sup>1</sup>

The hermyte with that shortlye dyd awake,  
And called Robert, and spaeke to hym ; 770  
And saide: heare nowe the pennaunce that ye shall  
take.

God commaundeth the to counterfet a foole in all  
thinge:

Meate none to eate, withoute a dogge do yt brynge  
To the in hys mouth ; then muste thou yt eate :  
No worde to speake, but as dombe<sup>2</sup> euer beynghe :  
With dogges euery nyght also thou must sleepe.

The hermyte said: tyll thy synnes be forgeue,  
Thou must do as I haue here sayde ;  
With thys sharpe pennaunce thou must lyue,  
Tyll god of hys debtes by the be payde. 780  
Forgot not thys ; in thy hearte let it be layde ;  
At the last god wyll sende the worde agayne.  
Robert wepte as thoughe he shoulde haue dyed,  
And sayde: thys pennaunce will I do full fayne.

The hermyte bade hym remember althynghe :  
And whan thy synnes be cleane forgeuen the,

<sup>1</sup> In *Syr Gowghter*, it is the Pope himself who imposes the penance:—

“Thow shalt walk north and sowthe,  
And gete thi mete out of houndis mouth,  
This penaunce shalt thow gynne.  
And speke no worde, euen ne odde,  
Til thow haue very wetyng of Godde,  
Forgevyn be all thy synne.”

<sup>2</sup> Ed. 1798 reads *bdombe*.

By an Aungell god wyll sende the warnynge ;  
 Nowe maye thou no longer byde with me.

Robert blessed the hermyte then trewlye.

So eche toke theyr leaue of other ;

790

Nowe god [sayd Robert] for euer be wyth the.

He sayd to Robert: nowe, farewell, brother.

There poore Robert departed fro the hermyte,

And blessed hym, and agayne went to Rome ;

For to do hys pennaunce in the strete.

And whan that he thether was come,

Lyke as he had ben a foole he dyd ronne,

And lepte and daunced from one syde to another.

Many folke laughed at hym soone,

And wende he had ben a foole, they knew none other. 800

Boyes folowed hym throughe the strete,

Castynge styckes and stones at hym ;

And some with roddes hys bodye dyd beate ;

The chyl dren made greate shoutes and cryenge.

Burges of the cyttie at Robert laye laughynge

Oute of theyr wyndowes, to se hym playe ;

The boyes threwe dyrte and myre at hym.

Thus contynewed Robert manye a daye.

Thus [when] he played the foole on a season,

He came on a tyme to the Emperours Courte, 810

And sawe that the gate stode all open ;

Robert ranne into the hall, and beganne to worke ;

So daunced and leapt [he,] and aboute so starte,

At the laste the Emperoure had pyttie on hym,

Howe he taere hys clothes, and gnew hys shyrte ;

And bade a seruante meate hym for to brynge.

Thys seruante brought Robert plentye of meate,

So proferde hyt hym, and saide, go dyne.  
 Robert sate styll; he woulde not eate:  
 Yet god wotte hys belly [had] greate pyne. 820  
 At last themperoure sayde: yonder ys a hounde of  
 myne;

And bade hys seruaunte throwe hym a bone.  
 So he dyd, and whan Robert yt had spyne:  
 Alaek, thought Robert, he shall not eate yt alone.

He lept from the table, and with the dogge faught;  
 And all for to haue the bone awaye;  
 The hounde at the last by the fyngers hym eaght,  
 So styll in hys mowthe he kepte hys praye.  
 Whan Robert sawe that, downe he laye:  
 The dogge gnewe the one ende, and Robert the other;  
 The Emperoure laughed, whan he that sawe, 831  
 And sayde the dogge and he fought harde together.<sup>1</sup>

The Emperoure sawe that he was hongrye,  
 And bade to throwe the dogge a hole loffe.  
 Whan Robert sawe that, he was glad greatlye,  
 For to lose hys parte he was right lothe,

<sup>1</sup> "The empo<sup>r</sup> and the empresse,  
 Lords and ladies, on the deyse,  
 They satt and hym byhilde;  
 They bed yeue the houndes mete y nowgh,  
 The domme manne with hem growth,  
 There was his best belde.  
 Thus among houndes he was fedde,  
 At euen to his chamber he was ledde,  
 And y helyd vnder a teld:  
 And euery day he came to hall,  
 And Hobbe the foole thei gan hym calle,  
 To Criste he gan him yelde."

*Syr Gougher*, line 341—352.

And agayne to the dogge he goeth.  
So brake the loffe a sonder, and to the hounde  
He gaue the one halfe, to saye the sothe,  
And eate the other, as the dogge dyd, on the grounde.

The Emperoure saide: syth that I was borne, 841  
Sawe I neuer a more foole naturall,  
Nor suche an ydeot sawe I neuer beforne,  
That had leuer eate that, that to the dogge dyd fall,  
Rather then that that was proffered hym in the hall.  
Than Robert toke hys staffe, and smote at forme and  
stile;

What sorowe was in hys hearte they knewe not [at] all;  
There men were gladde to see hym playe the foole.

At the last Robert went into a garden,  
And there he founde a fayre fountayne. 850  
He was a thurst, and whan he had dronken,  
He wente in to hys dogge agayne;  
To folowe hym euer he was fayne.  
Thus vnder a stayre at nyght laye the hounde,  
And euer hys pennaunce Robert dyd not dysdayne;  
Allwaye hys bed was with the dogge on the grounde.

Whan the Emperoure espyed hym lye there:  
Fett hym a bed, to a man dyd he saye,  
And lett yt be layed for hym under the stayre.  
So they dyd, and Robert poynted as naye;<sup>1</sup> 860  
And woulde have them to beare the bed awaye.  
Then they fett hym an arme full of strawe,  
And therupon by hys dogge he laye.  
All men marueyled that yt sawe.

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<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* signified by a gesture, that he would not lie on a bed.

Muehe myrth and sporte he made euer amonge ;<sup>1</sup>  
 And as the Emperoure was at dyner on a daye,  
 A Jue sate at the borde, that greate r[en]owme longe  
 In that house beare, and was receyued all waye.  
 Than Roberte hys dogge toke in hys armes in faye,  
 And touched the Jue, and he ouer hys sholder loked  
                   baeke. 870

Robert set the dogges . . . to hys mowth without naye ;  
 Full soore the Emperoure loughe, whan he sawe that.

Robert sawe a bryde that shoulde be maryed,  
 And soone he toke her by the hande.  
 So into a foule donge myxen he her earyed,  
 And in the myre he let her stande.  
 The Emperoure stode and behelde hym longe ;  
 At the last Robert toke a quycke Catte,  
 And ranne into the keehyn amonge the thronge,  
 And threwe her quycke into the beefe potte. 880

Lordes and barons loughe, that they coulde not stande,  
 To see hym make myrth withoute harme.  
 They saide he was the meryest in all that lande.  
 With that a messenger the Emperoure dyd warne  
 That aboute rome was many a Sarasyne ;  
 And saide : the Seneschall hathe gathered a great  
                   armye ;

Because ye wyll not let your daughter haue hym,  
 He purposeth all Rome for to dystroye.

Thys Emperoure had a doughter that coulde not  
                   speake,  
 The whiche the Seneschall loued as hys lyfe ; 890

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<sup>1</sup> i. e. constantly.

And ofte with the Emperoure he dyd treate,  
 For to haue her vnto hys wyfe.  
 And for that cause the Seneschall made thys stryfe,  
 Because the Emperoure in no wise woulde  
 Geue hym hys doughter; he swere ofte sythe  
 Maugre hys head wyne he shoulde.

The Emperoure heard of the Sarasyns that were come.  
 For to dystroye theyr chrystyan Countrey.  
 He made a crye in greate Rome,  
 That younge and olde shoulde make readye, 900  
 As manye as were betwene fyftene and sixtye.  
 Lordes, barons and knyghtes drewe out of euery cost,  
 With an houe companye and a myghtye;  
 They thought for to fell the Sarasyns greate hoste.<sup>1</sup>

So forth withall bothe these hostes mette,  
 Wyth weapons bright and stedes stronge.  
 So with soore strokes together they sette;  
 Theyr speares braste in peces longe.  
 Many a doughtye [knyght] was slayne in that thronge;  
 Greate horses stamped in yron wedes; 910  
 Oure chrysten men were put to the wronge  
 With woundes depen that full sore bledes.

Oure lorde<sup>2</sup> on hys seruantes had compassion,  
 And sent an Aungell with horse and armure

<sup>1</sup> The whole of this is in strict conformity with the prose narrative.

<sup>2</sup> One of the chapters in the prose fiction tells us "How our Sauyour Jhesu hauynge compassyon on the crysten blode, sent Robert by an aungell a whyte horse and harneys, commaundynge hym to go rescue and helpe the Romayns ayenst the Ethen dogges the Sarasyns."



Vnto Robert, as he dranke in the garden.  
 There the Aungell bade hym arme hym sure,  
 And saide : bestryde thys good stede that longe will  
 endure ;

And in all haste go ryde, and helpe the Emperoure.  
 Alacke, thought Robert, nede hath no cure.

Than rode he forth the space of an houre. 920

He rode into the thyekest of the fyelde,  
 And hue and slewe of the Sarasyns a greate numbre.  
 No steele nor harbargyn [was] that with hym helde ;  
 Hys dentes rouges as yt had ben thonder ;  
 He smote mennes bodyes cleane a sonder.  
 Hys sworde made many a head to blede,  
 That the Emperoure had greate wonder,  
 What knyght yt was that he sawe so doughtye in dede.

With the helpe of god and Robert that knyght,  
 That daye the Sarasyns loste the fyelde ; 930  
 And whan that ended was that fyght,  
 Euery man houered and behelde,  
 Where that whyte knyght was that wepon dyd welde.  
 But Robert wente into the garden,  
 And layde downe bothe harnes and shyld.  
 Yt vanyshed a waye ; he wyst not where yt became.

And all thys sawe the Emperours doughter :  
 That the Aungell brought Robert the whyte stede,  
 And howe at the welles syde he dyd of all hys armure ;  
 Therof she had greate maruayle in dede. 940  
 At the last the Emperours men dyd of theyr wede,  
 And came to dyner into theyr lordes hall.  
 The Emperoure said : this daye Jesu dyd vs spede,  
 And the white knyght fayre must hym befall.

Than Robert came in, lyke a foole playinge,  
 Into the hall, and leapte from place to place.  
 The Emperoure was glad to se Robert daunsynge.

Than he spyed a great race of bloude in Robertes face ;  
 But that he gate when he in the battayle was.

The Emperoure wende that hys seruauntes had hurt  
 hym so, 950

And saide : there ys some rybaude in thys place,  
 That hath hurte my Robert, that no harm can do.

The Emperoure asked whether<sup>1</sup> that whyte knyght  
 was gone.

Hys lordes aunswered : we can not saye.

At the last hys doughter, that was bothe deafe and  
 dombe,

Euer she poynted to Robert allwaye.

Her father wondred at her in good faye,

And asked her mystres,<sup>2</sup> what hys doughter ment.

She said : she meaneth that Robert thys daye

Holpe youe to wyne the fyelde with hys doughty  
 dente. 960

Her mystres said that Robertes greate bloudye race,  
 Yourc doughter meaneth he had it in the fyelde.

At her wordes the Emperoure asshamed was,

And waxed angrye ; and that hys doughter behelde.

He saide : thys folysh mayde thynketh he fought in  
 the fielde.

He bade her mestres teache her more better :

For,<sup>3</sup> and she will not wyser be in her elde,

A foole shall she dye, there maye no man let her.

<sup>1</sup> Whither.    <sup>2</sup> *i. e.* her governess.    <sup>3</sup> Ed. 1798 has *far*.

Than the seconde tyme the Sarasins came to Rome,  
 And with the Emperoure fought a sore fylde. 970  
 The Aungell agayne to Robert dyd come,  
 And then he rode forth hys weapon to welde.  
 He perissched brestplates and many a shyld;  
 He strooke of bothe legge and arme;  
 The Emperoure that knyght agayne behelde;  
 To watehe for hym hys men he dyd warne.

But he was gone, they wyst not whether.  
 So on the morowe an other fylde was pyght;  
 The Emperoure charged euery man to do his endeuer,  
 For to haue knowen that whyte knyght. 980  
 So, on the morowe that they shoulde fyght,  
 Syxe knyghtes laye in a woode preuelye and styll.  
 They sayde: we wyll of that noble man haue a sight,  
 And to our lorde brynge hym we wyll.

On the morowe the sunne shone bright;  
 Bothe partyes there was assembled;  
 All the fylde gaue a greate lyght  
 Of the gleyues that glystred. The stedes trembled;  
 A wonder [it was] to heare the brydles that gyngled.  
 With arbelaters they shot many a quarell;<sup>1</sup> 990  
 All the grounde of the noyse rombled;  
 Throughe the helpe of Robert, the Chrysten men sped  
 well.

That daye Robert proued hym doughtye of hande.  
 Manye fro theyr horses downe he dyd shlynge;

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<sup>1</sup> Anything of square form was anciently denominated a *quarrel*, or *quarel*. Here the word may signify a square-headed arrow shot from a cross-bow.

None was able hys dente for to with stande.  
 There men myght heare greate rappes rynge ;  
 The noyse of gunnes made such a bellowynge,  
 All the fyelde sowned as yt had ben thonder.  
 Of bloude greate gutters they myght se runnyng,  
 And many a knyghtes head cleft a sonder. 1000

All Sarasyns fled, the chrysten won the fyelde.  
 Robert rode awaye than full pryuelye.  
 The knyghtes in the wodde hym behelde,  
 And lowde vnto hym beganne to crye :  
 Syr knyght, speake with vs for thy courtesye.  
 Robert thought not agayne to turne.  
 The other knyghtes rode after hastelye,  
 And smote theyr horses with spores, and after dyd  
 runne.

Roberte ranne ouer dale and hyll ;  
 Hys stede was good that he had there. 1010  
 A bolde knyght folowed after hym styll,  
 And into the reste he threwe hys speare ;  
 So strongelye to Robert he hyt beare,  
 To haue slayne hys horse, and smote hym in the thye.  
 The speare head brast, and in hys legge bode there ;  
 Than was thys gentle knyght full soorye.

Backe agayne rode than thys knyght so bolde,  
 And shewed the Emperoure that he was gone agayne.  
 There of hys speare heade he hym tolde :  
 To see hym, quod the Emperoure, I woulde full  
 fayne. 1020

Than throughe all hys lande he dyd proclayme,  
 That he that woulde shewe the greate wounde with the  
 speare head,

Shoulde haue hys doughter, and not her layne,  
Vnto hys wyfe her for to wedde.

When the Seneschall hearde the proclamacion,  
He made hymself a greate wounde throughe the thyne ;  
So gate a speare and whyte armoure soone,  
And so rode to the Emperoure with all hys meynye.  
And said : Syr Emperoure, that valyaunt knyght am I,  
That saued youe thre tymes fro grame. 1030  
The Emperoure said to hym : thou art not lykelye,  
And bade hym holde hys peace for shame.

At last the Seneschall shewed hym hys wounde,  
And said : beholde thys and the head of the speare.  
The Emperoure was abashed in that stounde ;  
So there he gaue the Seneschall hys doughter :  
And on the morowe he shoulde be maryed vnto her.  
So was the Emperoure by hym beguyled ;  
He wende verelye that he had ben there,  
And fought in the felde as a knyght doughted. 1040

On the morowe thys greate weddyng shoulde be,  
That the Seneschall shoulde haue hys doughter.  
And so [they] brought her to church, [and] the  
seruyee began ready.

There by myracle thys lady spake to her father,  
And saide : thys traytoure he hath beguyled youe here :  
For Robert was he that helpe you in the fylde.  
I sawe an Aungell brynge hym bothe shyld and speare ;  
With these two wordes downe on her knees she kneled.

And the Emperoure whan he sawe hys daughter  
speake, 1050  
For ioye he was nere oute of hys mynde,  
And thanked god for that myracle greate.

Than the Seneschall with shame shranke behynde.  
 So to the Pope the Emperoure dyd wynde ;  
 The mayde tolde the Pope what Robert had done,  
 And brought them to the welle the speare head to fynde,  
 And betwene two stones she espyed yt sone.

Than went to seke Robert bothe lordes and ladyes  
 greate ;

At the laste they founde hym lye[nge] vnder the  
 stayre

Amonge the dogges, and with them [he] dydde eate. 1060  
 They desyred hym to speake with wordes fayre ;  
 But he made signes as he coule not heare.

With that came an hermyte, & toke hym by the sleue,  
 Sent thether by god. He was hys goostlye father,  
 And bade hym speake, sayinge hys synnes were forgaue.

Yet was he afearde to speake, and durst not [his  
 lippes ope].

The Emperoure prayed hym to se hys thye.

Robert woulde not heare ; but whan he sawe the Pope,  
 He raunce and played hys tauntes about lyghtlye.

The pope bade hym speake for the loue of Marye. 1070  
 Robert hym scorned, and gaue hym hys blessinge.

He woulde not breake hys pennaunce, he had leuer dye.  
 Then the hermyte bade hym speake, [saynge:] for-  
 geuen is thy synne.

With that Robert fell downe on hys knee,  
 And thanked Jesu that forgaue hym hys myslyuynge.  
 The pope and the Emperoure were glad trewlye,  
 But most of all that ladye made reioysynge  
 That was the Emperoures doughter, that yongelynge,  
 Desyringe her father that she myght Robert wedde.

For thy askynge, said he; I gyue the my bles-  
synge; 1080

In all the haste, daughter, yt shalbe spedde.

Than Robert maryed the Emperours doughter,  
A feast was holde of great solempnytie.

Eche of them was<sup>1</sup> full gladde of other;

And at the last, when ended was thys ryaltye,

He toke leaue of the Emperoure, and to hys owne  
country

He yede: for the imp hys father was dead;

Also a false knyght put hys mother in greate ieopardye,

Whych Robert at the laste hynge by the headde.

With hys mother he mette in the cyttye of  
Rome; 1090

The Duekes was then glad and blythe,

That Robert her soune so vertuous was come home,

Whiche in hys youthe lyued so myscheuous a lyfe.

Than all men loued hym, both mayde and wyfe;

Tyll it befell vpon a certayne daye,

A messenger eame from the Emperoure full swythe,

And prayed hym to come to Rome in all the hast he maye.

He tolde that the Seneschall had greate warre

With hys lorde the Emperoure in dede.

Robert sent after men nye and farre; 1100

In all the haste thether he gan spede.

But ere he came, was done a myscheuous dede;

The Senesehall the Emperoure had slayne.

For sorowe Robertes hearte dyd blede;

In fyelde he woulde haue fought full fayne.

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. 1798 has *were*.

The Seneschall hearde that Robert was come,  
 And purposed for to mete hym in the fylde.  
 He reared up many a blaek Sarason,  
 With wepon stronge, bothe speare and shyelde.  
 So ether partyes other behelde, 1110  
 And fought together a greate batteyll.  
 There Robert with hys handes the Seneschall kylde,  
 So to hys countrey returned without fayle.

And whan he came agayne to Normandye,  
 He dreade euer god, and kepte hys lawe ;  
 So lyued he full deuoutelye :  
 For all thynghe woulde he do vnder awe,  
 And punyshe Rebelles both hange and drawe.  
 Than was he called the seruaunte of god ;  
 No thefe woulde he saue, that he myght knowe, 1120  
 For dreade of goddes righteousnes the sharpe rodde.

One chylde by the Emperours doughter he had,  
 That was a knyght with Kinge charles of Fraunce.  
 In manfull dedes he hys lyfe ladde ;  
 Doughty he was bothe with speare and launce.  
 Lo, thy[s] Robert ended hys lyfe in pennaunee ;  
 And whan he dyed, hys soule went to heauen hye.  
 Nowe all men beare these in remembraunee :  
 He that lyueth well here, no euyl death shall dye.

Yonge and olde, that delyteth to reade in storrye, 1130  
 Yt shall youe styrre to uertuous lyuynge,  
 And cause some to haue theyr memorye  
 Of the paynes of hell, that ys euer durynge.  
 By readyng bookes men knowe all thynghe,  
 That euer was done, and hereafter shallbe.  
 Idlenes to myscheif many a one doth brynge,



And speccially as we daylye may see.

Take youe ensample of thys story olde,  
 Howe that he in youth dyd greate vengeance;  
 In doyng myscheife he was euer bolde, 1140  
 Tyll god sent to hym good remembraunce.  
 And after that he toke suche repentaunce,  
 That he was called the seruaunte of god by name,  
 And so contynewed without varyaunce.  
 God geue vs grace, that we may do the same.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Here endeth the lyfe of Robert the Deuyll.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to *Syr Gowghter*, the hero died in the odour of sanctity, and after his death miracles were performed in his name.

<sup>2</sup> The prose romance concludes thus:—

“Thus endeth the lyfe of Robert the Deuyll,  
 That was the servaunt of our Lorde,  
 And of his condycyons that was full euyl,  
 Emprynted in London by Wynkyn de Worde.

Here endeth the lyfe of the most feerfullest and unmercyfullest  
 and myscheuous Robert the Deuyll, whiche was afterwarde called  
 the Servaunt of our Lorde Jhesu Cryste. Emprynted in Flete-  
 strete in the sygne of the sonne, by Wynkyn de Worde.”





## Kynge Roberd of Cysille.

THE romantic Life of Robert, King of Sicily and Jerusalem, Duke of Apulia, &c., is an almost indispensable feature in a collection of early popular poetry, at all pretending to completeness. The myth, on which this piece of biography is founded, was one of the most attractive legends of the Middle Ages, and it furnishes a curious example of the superstructure of romantic episodes on authentic events. Whatever may have been asserted or argued to the contrary,<sup>1</sup> there is no room to doubt that King Robert of Sicily was quite a different person from Robert, father of William the Conqueror, and sixth Duke of Normandy, the hero of all the works of fiction which, in a variety of forms, continued from a very early period down to the close of the sixteenth century to be founded on supposed incidents in the career of ROBERT THE DEVIL. With the former personage the reader of Froissart's *Chronicles* (ed. 1525, i. c. 39, *et alibi*) must be sufficiently familiar; the historian speaks of him as "a great astronomyre (as it was sayd), and full of great science."<sup>2</sup>

The incidents and characteristics, which the two legends have in common, make it allowable, however, to presume that a process of interchange in some of their features took place at a remote

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<sup>1</sup> See Collier's *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, i. 114.

<sup>2</sup> The King of Sicily endeavoured to make peace between Edward III. and the French monarch. The reader will find an account of the matter in Froissart, translated by Johnes, i. 74, ed. 1851. King Robert composed a "Treatise on the Moral Virtues," in metre, an Italian version of which appeared at Rome, 1642, folio, with two or three other opusculi.

period, and that the romancists were tempted to engraft circumstances taken from the *Life of Robert the Devil* (and elsewhere) on the history of the somewhat less renowned Robert of Sicily.

The intermixture of fable with fact, which we find here, was perfectly congenial to the tastes and feelings of an age, which had been taught to peruse with delight the tedious pages of the *Vitæ Patrum*, *Legenda Aurea*, and *Gesta Romanorum*, and was also quite in keeping with the spirit of that literature. The *Lyfe of Virgilius*, the *History of Fryer Bacon*, the *Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, present parallel instances of legendary interpolations in the text of history; and this list might easily be augmented.

It is not surprising that the kindred legend of *Robert the Devil* won even greater popularity in France than in England, when we consider that the French were at liberty to regard the subject as one of local interest, and were almost entitled to claim that Robert as a national hero. In 1496, appeared at Lyons in 4º, "La vie du terrible Robert le Diable, le quel apres fut nommé Lomme Dieu;" this volume was reprinted at Paris in the succeeding year; and other editions were from time to time sent from the press. In 1787, the romance was included in the *Bibliothèque Bleue*. An early French morality, which does not seem to have ever passed the press, is entitled: "Comment il fut enjoient a Robert le Diable, fils du Duc de Normandie, pour ses Mesfaites de faire le fol, sang parlez; et depuis N[ostre] S[eigneur] eut merci de lui."<sup>1</sup>

In 1529, the "play of Robert Cicill" was performed at the High Cross of Chester, on which occasion the Cross was "new gilt with gold." A letter found by Mr. Collier, in the Chapter House at Westminster, among the papers of Cromwell, Earl of Essex, alludes to this dramatic production in the following terms:—

"We holde it convenyent and proppre to infourme your good Lordshyppe of a play, which som of the companyes of this Cittye of Chester at theyr costes and charges are makynge redy, for that your good Lordshyppe maye see wether the same be in any wyse unfyttyng for them, as honest menne and duetyfull

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<sup>1</sup> The British Museum Library possesses several other publications in French relative to this subject.

subjectes of his Majestye. The sayde playe is not newe at thys tyme, but hath bin bifore shewen, evyn as longe agoe as the reygne of his highnes most gracious fater of blyssyd memorye, and yt was penned by a godly clerke, merely for delectacion, and the teachynge of the people to love feare God and his Majestye, and all those that bee in auctoryte. It is callyd Kynge Robart of Cicyllye, the whiche was warned by an Aungell whiche went to Rome, and shewyd Kyng Robart all the powre of God, and what thyng yt was to be a pore man; and thanne, after sondrye wanderynges, ledde hym backe agayne to his kingdome of Cicyllye, where he lyved and raygned many yeres."

Hence we learn that "Kynge Robart of Cicyllye" was dramatised as early as the reign of Heury VII., perhaps about 1496, when the French prose romance of Robert the Devil, according to our present bibliographical information, was originally published. Distinct as the two works were, it is tolerably clear that the "godly clerke," of whom the mayor and corporation of Chester speak as the author of the English morality, was considerably indebted to the French prose romance, or a translation of it; but it is to be observed, that the writer being forced to arrange his details for representation on a stage, confined himself to the narrative of Robert's fall, penance, and pardon. But the question then arises, what led him to shift the scene from Normandy to Sicily? and this problem is, indeed, very difficult of solution. It is nevertheless certain that the morality just described shewed a certain portion of the *Life of Robert the Devil* blended with the history, fabulous or otherwise, of the *King Robert of Sicily*, of whom Froissart and other writers of the time have left a brief account. The dramatic composition performed at Chester in 1529, and written about forty years before, has seemingly perished, and the sole trace of it is in the letter to Cromwell. It is therefore impossible to judge whether the dramatist confined himself to the material found in the prose narrative, or whether he also availed himself of a story found in the English *Gesta Romanorum*.

On one point, it appears safe to speculate with some degree of confidence. Setting the question aside as to the origiu of them and the manifest affinities between the legends, we can feel little hesitation in deciding that the author of the poem here printed owed his knowledge of the subject partly to the drama and

partly to an article in the *Gesta Romanorum*; in three leading respects the reader will perceive on comparison, that he has followed very closely the letter of the *Gesta*—namely, in the specification of pride as the cause of his punishment, the nature of the sentence undergone by the culprit, and the preservation by the latter throughout of a perfect consciousness of his personal identity. But in all the narratives we find some variation or other. For example, in the *Gesta Romanorum* and in the poem of *Kynge Roberd of Cysille*, impious pride is alike assigned as the offence by which the hero draws on himself the wrath of Heaven; but when we compare the circumstances under which the counterfeit sovereign gains possession of the crown, we find them totally different. Again, all the accounts agree in reducing the culprit temporarily to the condition of a domestic fool; but whereas in the *Gesta* and in the shorter poem (*K. Roberd of Cysille*) he becomes fool at his own court to the disguised angel, he is represented by the writers of the prose romance and longer poetical version (*Robert the Deuyll*) as serving the Pope, and subsequently the Emperor, in this capacity. In the prose and metrical romances of “Robert the Devil,” which scarcely differ except in form, sundry matters of a subsidiary character occur, which we miss altogether in the *Gesta*, as well as in *Kynge Roberd of Cysille*.

The letter from Chester declares the object of the godly clerk aforesaid in composing this piece to have been “merely delectacion, and the teachynge of the people to love and feare God and his Majestye.”

The French prose romance of Robert the Devil, printed at Lyons in 1496, and at Paris in 1497, was turned into English by some unknown person, and printed, at least twice, by Wynkyn de Worde without date in 4°;<sup>1</sup> and nearly at the same time, De Worde, or his contemporary, Pynson, issued an anonymous and undated *metrical* version, closely following the prose one, but still, perhaps, an independent translation from the French copy. This has also been admitted into these pages (see the pre-

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<sup>1</sup> The two copies which are extant of this work are of two different impressions, though both consist of the same number of leaves, viz. twenty-nine. The variations are specified in Thoms' *Early Prose Romances*, 1828, i.

ceding article) in consideration of the extreme curiosity of the production and the *English* interest of the subject; and the reader has thus an opportunity, for the first time, of comparing the two pieces together. As regards the date of the black-letter edition of the poem just mentioned, it can only be said that Wynkyn de Worde began to print as early as 1495, and carried on business as late as 1534; Pynson's date is from 1493 to 1533; and the metrical romance of *Robert the Devil* may therefore have been in print before 1500, or it may have been one of Pynson's or De Worde's latest performances.

The person, who was concerned in the composition of the poem now before us, only followed the same course as the compiler of the morality acted at Chester in 1529, both in the transition to Sicily and in the selection for poetical treatment of that part of the prose fiction which narrates the vicissitudes of Robert the Devil's later life, with his ultimate return to power and happiness.

Sir Frederick Madden pointed out, in his edition of the *Old English Versions of the Gesta Romanorum*, 1838, 4<sup>o</sup>., that the foundation-story of ROBERT THE DEVIL and ROBERT OF SICILY is the tale of *Jovinianus*, which is told at considerable length both in the English and Latin *Gesta*; and that gentleman<sup>1</sup> has also referred to the existence of another specimen of the same class of story, namely, the Romance of *Sir Gowgther*<sup>2</sup> which, in its character, is substantially identical with *Robert the Devil*, the names, localities, and other adventitious features only being changed.

Of the poem of "Kynge Roberd of Cysille," there is a MS. among Bishop More's papers in the Public Library at Cambridge; this has been edited by Mr. Halliwell, in *Nugæ Poeticæ*, 1844, 8<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See also Thoms' Introduction to *Robert the Deuyll* in his "Early Prose Romances," 1828, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> In Royal MS. 17, from which it was published by Utterson in his *Select Pieces of Early Popular Poetry*, 1817, 8<sup>o</sup>., vol. i. The romance of *Syr Gowghter* professes to have been

"—— wreten in parchemen,  
In a stori good and fyn,  
In the first lay of Britanye."



Another copy is extant in the Harleian collection, from which the late Mr. Utterson printed, at his own expense, thirty copies for private circulation in 1839. The present edition is formed from a comparison of these two texts.<sup>1</sup> But there are two or three other MSS. of the poem in our public libraries.

In 1591, Thomas Lodge, an eminent poet and miscellaneous writer, published a drama entitled "The Famous, true and historical Life of Robert second Duke of Normandy, surnamed for his monstrous birth and behauiour, Robin the Diuell. Wherein is contained his dissolute life in his youth, his deuout reconciliation and vertues in his age; interlaced with many straunge and miraculous aduentures. Wherein are both causes of profite, and manie conceits of pleasure." 4<sup>o</sup>.

In 1607, Humphrey King issued a poetical tract under the title of "Robin the Devil; his two penni-worth of Wit in a half a penni-worth of Paper," which went through three editions, the third appearing in 1613, 4<sup>o</sup>., under this title: "An Halfe penny worth of Wit in a Penny worth of Paper; or the Hermites tale."

King's poem seems to afford the latest example of an attempt to present to the public in a novel shape the extraordinary narrative which, so far as can be ascertained, had been first made familiar to lovers of the marvellous through the pages of the *Gesta Romanorum*<sup>2</sup> under a different form, and which, in the course of centuries, had been the means of conveying instruction and amusement to thousands of readers, listeners, or spectators.

<sup>1</sup> It is by no means improbable that, although now known to exist in MS. only, *Kynge Roberd of Cysille* was formerly to be found in a printed shape. The *ballett*, mentioned in the subjoined extract from the Registers of the Stationers' Company (Collier's *Extracts*, i. 205), may or may not have been the identical production. We are inclined to guess that it was.

"[1569-70.] Rd. of Wyllm Greffeth, for his lycense for the pryntinge of a ballett intituled a proper new dytty of Kynge Roberte of Sevell [Secell, *i. e.* Sicily]. iiiid."

<sup>2</sup> It is supposed that this collection of tales and legends was composed about the beginning of the fourteenth century.



RYNCE, that be prowde in prese,  
 I wylle [telle]<sup>1</sup> that that ys no lees.  
 Yn Cysylle was a nobulle kynge,  
 Fayre and stronge, and some dele ȝynge;  
 He had a brodur in grete Rome,  
 That was pope of alle Crystendome;  
 Of Almayne hys odor brodur was emperowre,  
 Thorow Crystendome he had honowre.  
 The kynge was ealde kynge Roberd,  
 Never man in hys tyme wyste hym aferde. 10  
 He was kynge of grete valowre,  
 And also callyd conquerowre;  
 Nowhere in no lande was hys pere,  
 Kynge nor dewke, ferre nor nere,  
 And also he was of chevalrye the flowre:  
 And hys odor brodur was emperowre.  
 Hys oon brodur in ȝorthe Godes generalle vykere,  
 Pope of Rome, as ye may here;  
 Thys pope was callyd pope Urbane:  
 For hym lovyd bothe God and man; 20  
 The emperowre was callyd Valamownde,  
 A strawnger warreowre was none fownde  
 Aftur hys brodur, the kyng of Cysyle,  
 Of whome y thynke to speke a whyle.  
 The kynge thoght he had no pere  
 For to aeownte, nodur far nor nere,

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<sup>1</sup> The MS. used by Mr. Utterson has:—

“I wol ȝow telle of thyng no les.”



And thorow hys thocht he had a pryde,  
 For he had no pere, he thoȝt, on no syde.  
 And on a nyght of seynt Johan,  
 Thys kynge to the churche come, 30  
 For to here hys evynsonge ;  
 Hys dwellynge thoȝt he there to longe ;  
 He thocht more of worldys honowre,  
 Then of Cryste hys saveowre.  
 In *magnificat* he harde a vers,  
 He made a clerke hym hyt<sup>1</sup> reherse  
 In the langage of hys owne tonge :  
 For in Laten wyste he not what they songe.  
 The verse was thys, as y telle the,  
*Deposuit potentes de sede,* 40  
*Et exaltavit humiles.*  
 Thys was the verse withowten lees ;  
 The clerke seyde anon ryght :  
 Syr, soche ys Godys myght,  
 That he make may hye lowe,  
 And lowe hye in a lytylle throwe.  
 God may do, withowten lye,  
 Hys wyll in the twynkelyng of an ye.  
 The kyng seyde than with thoȝt unstabulle :  
 Ye synge thys ofte, and alle hys a fabulle. 50  
 What man hath that powere  
 To make me lowear, and in dawngere ?  
 I am flowre of chevalrye ;  
 Alle myn enmyes y may dystroye.  
 Ther levyth no man in no lande,

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge copy reads *to hym hyt to*.

That my myght may withstande ;  
 Then ys yowre songe a songe of noght.  
 Thys arrowre had he in hys thoght,  
 And in hys thocht a slepe hym toke  
 In hys closet, so seyth the boke. 60  
 When evynsonge was alle done,  
 A kynge, hym lyke, owte can come,  
 And alle men with hym can wende,  
 And kynge Roberd lefte behynde.  
 The newe kynge was, y yow telle,  
 Godys aungelle, hys pryde to felle ;  
 The aungelle in the halle yoye made,  
 And alle men of hym were glade.  
 Kynge Roberd wakenyd that was in the kyrke ;  
 Hys men he thoȝt woo for to wyrke, 70  
 For he was lefte there allone,  
 And merke nyght felle hym upon.  
 He began to crye upon hys men ;  
 But there was none that answeyrd then,  
 But the sexten at the ende  
 Of the kyrke, and to hym can wende,  
 And seyde : lurden,<sup>1</sup> what doyst thou here ?

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<sup>1</sup> Idle fellow, rascal. The word is sometimes spelled *lordeyn*. Hence idleness is termed the *fever-lordeyn* or *lurden*. *Vide suprà*, p. 93, *note*. In *Ludus Coventriæ*, there is the expression "stynkynge lurdeyn;" and in his poem of "Sir Thomas Norroy," Dunbar says:—

"Thairfoir Quhentyne was bot ane lurdane,  
 That callit him ane full plum Jurdane,  
 This wyse and worthie knyght."

*Poems*, ed. Laing, i. 126.

Thou art a thefe or thefeys fere ;  
 Thou arte here sykerlye  
 Thys church to robbe with felonye. 80  
 He seyde : fals thefe, and fowle gadlyng,  
 Thou lvest falsely ; y am thy kynge :  
 Opyn the church dore anon,  
 That y may to my pales gone.  
 The sexesten went welle than,  
 That he had be a wode man,  
 And of hym he had farlye,  
 And wolde delyver the church in hye,  
 And openyd the dore ryȝt sone in haste.  
 The kyng began to renne owte faste, 90  
 As a man that was nere wode,  
 And at hys pales ȝate he stode,  
 And callyd the portar : gadlyng, begone,  
 And bad hym come faste, and hye hym soone,<sup>1</sup>  
 Anon the ȝates that thou undoo.  
 The portar askyd who bad soo ;  
 And he answeryd ryȝt soone anon :  
 Thou schalt wytt, or y hens gone ;  
 Thy lorde y am, that schalt thou knowe,  
 In pryson schalt thou lye fulle lowe, 100  
 And bothe be hangyd and be drawe,  
 And odor moo, as be the lawe.  
 I schalle yow teche me for to knawe,  
 And brynge yow fro yowre lyfe dawe.  
 Thou schalt wyt that y am kynge ;  
 Do opyn the ȝatys, thou false gadlynge.

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<sup>1</sup> The next twelve lines are not in Utterson's copy.

The porter seyde : for sothe y telle the,  
 The kyng ys in the halle with hys meyné ;  
 Welle y wote withowten dowte,  
 The kyng ys not thus late owte. 110  
 The porter wente into the halle,  
 And before the kyng can falle,  
 And seyde : ther ys, lorde, at the ȝate  
 A nyce fole comyn ther to late,  
 And seyth he ys here lorde and kyng,  
 And callyth me false and fowle gadlynge.  
 Lorde, what wylle ye that y doo,  
 Let hym yn or let hym goo ?  
 The aungelle seyde to hym in haste :  
 Let hym in come swythe faste : 120  
 For my fole y schalle hym make.  
 Tyl he the name of kyng forsake.<sup>1</sup>  
 The portar came unto the ȝate,  
 And calde hym swythe yn ther-ate ;  
 And he began for to debate.  
 He smote the porter, when he came yn,  
 That the blode braste owt at mowthe and chyn.  
 The portar ȝalde hym hys travayle,  
 He smote hym agayne withowten fayle,  
 That mowthe and nose braste on blode, 130  
 And then he semyd almoost wode.  
 The porter and hys men in haste  
 Kyng Roberd in a podelle caste ;  
 Unsemely was hys body than,  
 That he was lyke non odur man.

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<sup>1</sup> This line is not in ed. 1844.

Then broȝht they hym before the kyng,  
 And seyde : lorde, thys gadlynge  
 Me hath smetyn withowten descerte,  
 And seyth that he ys owre kyng aperte.  
 He seyde y schulde be drawe and honge, 140  
 Hys owne dome ys ryght he fonge ;  
 To me he seyde non odur worde,  
 But that he was bothe kyng and lorde ;  
 The traytur schulde, for hys sawe,  
 Be the lawe bothe be hangyd and drawe.  
 The aungelle seyde to kyng Roberde :  
 Thou art a foole, that art not aferde  
 My men to do soche velanye,  
 That ylke trespas thou muste abyge ;  
 What art thou ? seyde the aungelle. 150  
 Tho seyde Roberd : thou schalt wyt welle  
 I am kyng, and kyng wylle bee,  
 Wyth wrange thou haste my dygnyté ;  
 The pope of Rome ys my brodur,  
 The emperowre Valamownde ys the todur.  
 He wylle me awreke, y dar welle telle ;  
 I wot he wylle not longe dwelle.  
 Thou art a fole, seyde the aungelle,  
 Thou schalt be schavyn ovyr ylke a dele,  
 Lyke a fole, and a fole to bee ; 160  
 Thy babulle schalle be thy dygnyté ;  
 Thy crowne schalle be newe schorne :  
 For thy crowne of golde ys lorne ;  
 Thy counsellere schalle be an ape,  
 And in a clothyng ye schalle be schape,  
 And he schalle be thyn own fere,

Some wytt of hym ȝyt may thou lere.  
 He schalle be cladd ryght as thy brodur,  
 Of oon clothyng; hyt schalle be non odor;  
 Howndys, how so hyt be falle, 170  
 Schalle ete wyth the in the halle;  
 Thou schalt ete on the grownde,  
 Thyn assayar<sup>1</sup> schalle be an hownde,  
 To assaye thy mete before the:  
 For thou art a kynge of dygnyté.  
 They broght a barbur hym beforne,  
 That as a fole schulde be schorne,  
 Alle arownde, lyke a frere,  
 And then ovyr-twhart to eydur ere,  
 And on the crowne hym make a crosse. 180  
 Then he began to crye and make noyse;  
 He sware that they schulde alle dye  
 That dud hym soche velanye;  
 And ever he seyde he was ther lorde,  
 And alle men scornyd hym for that worde;  
 And every man seyde that he was wode,  
 That provyd wele he cowde no gode:  
 For he wende on no kyns wyse,  
 That myghtfulle God cowde devyse  
 Hym to brynge to lowar estate, 190  
 And with a draght he was chekmate.  
 At lowar degré he myght not bee,

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<sup>1</sup> It was an ancient custom, which did not fall into disuse till comparatively recent times, that a *taster* or *assayer* should attend at every royal or noble table, to taste each dish, before the prince or peer partook of it, the object being to ascertain the non-existence of poison in the food.

Then become a fole, as thynkyth me,  
 And every man made scornynge  
 Of hym, that afore was a nobulle kyng.  
 Lo, how soone, be Goddys myght,  
 He was lowe, and that was ryght!  
 He was evyr so harde bestadd,  
 That mete nor drynke noon he had,  
 But hys babulle was in hys hande; 200  
 The aungelle before hym made hym to stande,  
 And seyde: fole, art thou kyng?  
 He seyde: ye, wythowte lesynge,  
 And here-aftur kyng wylle bee.  
 The aungelle seyde: so semyth the.  
 Hunger and thurste he had fulle grete:  
 For he myght no mete ete,  
 But howndys ete of hys dysche,<sup>1</sup>  
 Whedur hyt were flesche or fysche.  
 When that the howndes had etyn ther fylle, 210  
 Then myȝt he ete at hys wylle.  
 He was to dethe nere broght  
 For hunger, or he wold ete oght;  
 But when hyt wolde non odor be,  
 He ete with howndys grete plenté,  
 With the howndes that were in the halle;

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<sup>1</sup> In the old romance-poetry, dogs are always represented as the intimate companions of their masters, and as present even at meals. In the ballad of "The Maid as a hind and a hawk (Prior's *Ancient Danish Ballads*, iii. 126)," the Maid, in her account of herself, says:—

"I sat me down at my father's board,  
 With hounds and puppies to play."

How myȝt to hym harder befallē ?  
Bettur he were, to yow sey y,  
So to do, then for hunger dye.  
Ther was not in the court grome ne page, 220  
But they of the kyng made game and rage :  
For no man myght hym not knowe,  
He was dysfygerde in a throwe ;  
With howndys every nyght he laye,  
And ofte he eryed welle awaye,  
That ever ȝyt that he was borne,  
Hys ryalté he had for-lorne.  
He was to alle men undurlynge,  
So lowe was never ȝyt no kyng.  
Yf pryde had not bene, y understande, 230  
A wyser kyng was never in lande.  
With hys pryde God ean hym greve ;  
God boȝt hym dere, and wolde hym not leve ;  
God made hym to knowe hys ehastysynge,  
To be a fole, that afore was kyng.  
The aungelle was kyng fulle longe ;  
But in hys tyme was never no wrong,  
Treachery, falsehed, nor no gyle,  
Done in the lande of Cysyle ;  
Of alle gode there was plenté, 240  
Amonge men love and charyté,  
And in hys tyme was never stryfe,  
Nodur betwene man nor wyfe ;  
But every man lovyd welle odur,  
Bettur love was never of brodur.  
Then was that a yoyfulle thyng,  
In londe to have soche a kyng.



Kyng he was iij. yere and more,  
 And Roberd as a fole zede thore.  
 The aungelle askyd hym every day : 250  
 Fole, art thou kyng? thou me say.  
 He seyde: ye, that welle y knowe,  
 My brodur schalle brynge the fulle lowe.  
 That semyth the wele, seydc the aungelle,  
 The crowne semyth the no thyng welle.  
 Than Sir Valamownde the emperowre  
 Sende lettyrs of grete honowre  
 To hys brodur, of Cysyle the kyng,  
 To come to hym withowte lettyng,  
 That they myght bothe in same 260  
 Wende to ther brodur the pope of Rome,  
 To see hys nobulle and ryalle arraye  
 In Rome on Halowe Thursdaye.  
 The aungelle welcomyd the messengerys,  
 And clad them alle in clothys of pryse,  
 And furryd them with armyne;  
 Ther was never zyt pellere half so fyne;  
 And alle was set with perrye,  
 Ther was never no better in erystyanté;  
 Soeche clothyng and hyt were to dyght, 270  
 Alle crysten men hyt make ne myght;  
 Where soeche clothys were to selle,  
 Nor who them made, can no man telle.  
 On that wondyrd alle that lande,  
 Who wrozt those clothys with any hande.  
 The messengerys went with the kyng  
 To grete Rome, withowte lesyng;  
 The fole Roberd with hym went,

Clad in a fulle sympulle garment,  
 With foxe tayles riven alle<sup>1</sup> abowte ;  
 Men myght hym knowe in alle the rowte.  
 A babulle he bare agenste hys wylle,  
 The aungels harte to fulfylle.  
 To Rome came the aungelle soone,  
 So ryalle a kyng eame never in Rome ;  
 Alle men wondurd fro whens he eame,  
 So welle hys rayment sate hym on.  
 The aungelle was elad alle in whyte,  
 Ther was never in ȝerthe snowe hyt lyke,  
 And alle was cowehyd with perlys ryehe,  
 Bettur were nevyr, nor noon them lyche ;  
 Alle was whyte, atyre and stede,  
 The sted was feyre, where that he yede ;  
 So feyre a stede as he on rode,  
 Was never man that ever bestrode ;  
 And so was alle hys apparelle dyght.  
 The ryehes ean not ȝelle no wyght.  
 Of clothys, gyrdyls, and odor thyng ;  
 Every squyer semyd a kyng.  
 Alle they rode in ryehe arraye,  
 But kyng Roberd, y dar wele saye :  
 For alle men on hym can pyke,  
 For he rode non odor lyke ;  
 But ofte he made sory ehere,  
 That schulde be kyng and kynges fere,  
 That rode in Rome, and bare an ape,  
 And hys elothyng fulle evylle sehape,

280

290

300

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge copy reads *to renne abowte*.

That so he<sup>1</sup> foly<sup>2</sup> a fole was made :  
 A wondur hyt were yf he were glade.  
 The pope, and the emperowre also, 310  
 And odor barons many moo,  
 Welcomyd the aungelle as for kyng,  
 And made yoye for hys comynge ;  
 Forthe then came stertyng kyng Roberd,  
 As a fole<sup>3</sup> that was not aferde,  
 And lowde on hym he began to speke,  
 And seyde hys bredyrn schulde hym awreke  
 Of hym that hath, with queynt gyle,  
 Hys crowne and lande of Cysyle.  
 Pope, emperowre, nor non odor, 320  
 The fole knewe not for ther brodur ;  
 God put hym in odor lyknes  
 For hys grete unbuxumnes ;  
 A mekylle fole he was holde,  
 More then thars be an c. folde,  
 To cley<sup>4</sup>m soche a brodurhede,  
 Hyt was holdyn a folys dede.  
 Tho thre bredyr made grete comfort ;  
 The aungelle was made brodur be sorte ;  
 Wele was the pope and the emperowre, 330  
 That had a brodur of soche honowre.  
 Kyng Roberd began to make care,  
 Mekylle more then he can are :  
 For he trowyd of alle thyng

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. 1844 has *be*.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* fully.

<sup>3</sup> Cambridge copy has *as fole and man that*.

<sup>4</sup> Cambridge copy has *calle*.

Hys bredur schulde have made hym kynge ;  
 And when hys hope was alle awaye,  
 He seyde : allas and wele away.

The pope, the emperowre and the kynge,  
 Fyve wekys made they ther dwellynge ;  
 And when the v.<sup>the</sup> weke was alle done,

340

To ther own londes went they home,  
 Bothe the emperowre and the kynge ;  
 There was a feyre departynge.

When every oon of odur leeve can take,  
 The fole Robert grete sorow can make,  
 When no brodur hym can knowe :

Allas, he seyde, now am y lowe.

He thoght mekylle in that case,

How he was lowe ; he seyde allas.

He thoght upon Nabegodhonosore :

350

A nobulle kynge was he before,

In alle the worlde was not hys pere,

For to acownt, nodur far nor nere ;

Wyth hym was Sir Olyverne,

Prynce of knyghtes, stowte and sterne ;

Olyverne sware evyrmore,

Be god Nabegodhonosore :

For he helde no god in lande

But Nabegodhonosore, y understande ;

Nabegodhonosore was then fulle gladd,

360

When he the name of God hadd,

And lovyd Olyverne welle the more,

And sythen hyt grevyd them bothe fulle sore,

Olyverne dyed in grete dolowre :

For he was slayne in a harde schowre.

Nabegodhonosore was in deserte,  
He durste not nowhere be aperte ;  
Fyftene yere he levyd thare  
Wyth rotys and grasse, and evylle fare,  
And alle of mosse hys clothyng was, 370  
And that came alle be Godys grace :  
For pryde was that every dele ;  
Therwith lyked hym nothyng wele.  
He cryed mercy with sory chere,  
And God hym restored as he was ere.  
And now y am in soche a case ;  
Ye, and in welle warse then ever he was.  
When God me gave soche honowre,  
That y was callyd conquerowre,  
In every lande of Crystendome 380  
Of me they spake, bothe alle and some,  
And seyde : nowhere ys my pere  
In no lande, nodur farre nor nere ;  
And thorow that worde y felle in pryde,  
As the aungelle that can of hevyn glyde,  
And with the tywnklyng of an eye  
God for-dud alle that maystrye ;  
And so hath he done for my<sup>1</sup> gylte ;  
Now am y of my lande pylte ;  
And that ys ryght that y so bee, 390  
For, Lorde, y leevyd not on the.  
I had an errowre in my harte,  
And that errowre hath made me to smarte :  
For when y seyde in my sawe,

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. 1844 has *my for*.

That nothyng myght make me lawe,  
 And holy wrytt dyspysed withalle,  
 And for-thy<sup>1</sup> wrech of wrechys men me calle,  
 And fole of alle folys y am ȝyt,  
 For he ys a fole, God wottyth welle hyt,  
 That turneth hys wrytt unto folye ; 400  
 So have y done, mercy y crye ;  
 Now mercy, Lorde, for thy pyté ;  
 Aftur my gylte geve not me ;  
 Let me aby hyt in my lyve,  
 That y have synned with wyttes fyve ;  
 For hyt ys ryght a fole that y bee ;  
 Now, Lorde, of thy fole thou have pyté,<sup>2</sup>  
 Ryght so how that hyt befalle,  
 I ete with the howndys in the halle,  
 And leve so here for evyrmore, 410  
 As levyd Nabegodhonosore.  
 When he to Cryste thus ean calle,  
 Downe in swowne can he falle,  
 And evyr he seyde, with mylde mode :  
 I thanke the, Lorde, that ys so gode ;  
 Of my kyngdome me grevyth noȝt,  
 Hyt ys for my gylt and leder thoght.  
 Evyr thy fole, Lorde, wylle y bee :  
 Now, Lorde, of thy fole thou have pyté.<sup>2</sup>  
 The aungelle came into Cysyle, 420

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore. Sometimes the form is *for-thi*.

<sup>2</sup> In Utterson's copy there is an invocation to the Virgin immediately following this line ; but it is not found in the Cambridge one.

He and hys men, withynne a whyle ;  
 When he came into the halle,  
 The fole he gart before hym calle,  
 And seyde : fole, art thou kynge ?  
 Nay, sir, he seyde, withowte lesynge.  
 What art thou ? seyde the aungelle.  
 Syr, a fole, that wote ye welle,  
 And more then a fole, and hyt may bee,  
 I kepe non odur dygnyté.

The aungelle then to chaumbur went, 430  
 And aftur the fole anon he sente ;

He bad hys men forthe of the chaumbur to gone ;  
 There was lefte noon but he allone  
 And the fole, that stode hym by.

To hym he seyde : thou haste mercye ;  
 God hath forgevyn the thy mysdede,  
 And ever here-aftur loke thou hym drede.

Thynke how thou was owte pylte  
 Of thy lande for thy mysgylte,  
 To the lowest state that ys in lande, 440  
 That ys a fole, y undurstande.

A fole thou were to hevyn kynge,  
 And therfore thou art an undurlynge.

I am an aungelle of renowne,  
 Sente to kepe thy regyowne.  
 More blysse me schalle befallle,  
 In hevyn amonge my ferys alle,  
 Ye, in oon owre of a day,

Then in erthe, y dar welle saye,  
 In an hundurd thousande yere ; 450  
 Thogh alle the worlde, far and nere,

Were alle myn at my lykynge.  
I am an aungelle and thou art kynge.  
He went in the twynklyng of an yee ;  
No more of hym there was sye.  
Kynge Roberd came into the halle,  
Hys men he gart before hym calle,  
And alle they were at hys wylle,  
As to ther lorde, for hyt was skylle ;  
He loveyd God and holy kyrke, 460  
And evyr he thoght welle to wyrke,  
He levyd aftur two yere and more,  
And loovyd God and alle hys lore.  
The aungelle gaf hym in warnynge  
Of the tyme of hys levyng.  
When the tyme came of hys day soone,  
He made to wryte ryght anone,  
How God, be hys mekylle myght,  
Made hym lowe, as hyt was ryght :  
For he wende he myght not be 470  
Thorow Godes myȝt at lowar degré.  
He was made lowe in a lytylle throwe,  
And that was kyd and fulle welle knowe ;  
To be a fole to every knave,  
More schame myght he not have.  
He ete and laye with howndys eke ;  
Thogh he were prowde, hyt wolde hym meke.  
To alle men he was scornynge ;  
Loo, here was a dolefulle thyng,  
That he schulde so for hys pryde  
Soche happe among hys men betyde. 480  
Welle may ye wete hyt dyd hym gode,



Hyт made hym meke that arst was wode ;  
Hyт made hym to knowe God Allmyght,  
That hym broght to hevyn lyght.  
Thys story he sente every dele  
To hys brodur[s] undur hys sele ;  
And to the tyme of hys laste day,  
For that tyme he dyed, as he can saye,  
Hys bredur[s] thoght wele on the fole, 490  
That cryed to them with mekylle dole,  
And wyste wele that he was ther brodur,  
And knewe sothely hyт was non odor.  
In Cysyle knewe hyт many moo,  
That were with hym, when hyт was soo ;  
The pope of Rome hereof can preche,  
And the pepulle he can teche,  
That ther pryde they schulde forsake,  
And to gode vertues they schulde them take ;  
And seyde hys brodur, that was kynge, 500  
For hys pryde was an undurlynge :  
For pryde ys ferre fro God Allemyght ;  
Hyт may not come in hys syght.  
For pryde wolde, yf hyт myght bee,  
Ovyr-mownte Goddys dygnyté,  
And alle at hys owne wylle ;  
Thus thorow pryde man may hym spylle.  
Thys storye ys, withowten lye,  
At Rome wretyn in memorye.  
At Seynt Petur kyrke hyт ys knawe, 510  
And that ys Crystys owne lawe,  
That lowe be hye at Godys wylle ;  
And hye lowe, thogh hyт be ylle.

Prey we now to God in Trynyté,  
That ys so gode in dygnyté,  
That he graunt us that ylk blysse,  
That he hath ordeyned for alle hys.

Amen.



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